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# YOUNG INDIA

1924-1926

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# YOUNG INDIA

1924-1926

*By* MAHATMA GANDHI

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

*By* RAJENDRA PRASAD

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S. GANESAN,

PUBLISHER, TRIPLICANE, MADRAS. S. E.

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Civil Disobedience Committee and after.*—In the Introduction to *Young India* 1919-1922 a narrative of events during the period of the Non-co-operation movement up to 31st August, 1922 was given. The circumstances leading to the appointment of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee were detailed. The Enquiry Committee after a tour through the country and after recording evidence regarding its preparedness or otherwise for Civil Disobedience came to the unanimous conclusion that the country was not prepared to embark upon general Mass Civil Disobedience but recommended that Provincial Congress Committees be authorised to sanction Civil Disobedience of a limited character on certain conditions. It was also of opinion, unanimously, that it was desirable to seek election to Municipalities, District and Local Boards with a view to facilitating the constructive programme, that aggressive propaganda against Government schools and colleges or law courts should not be carried out and that organisation of labour should be taken in hand. There were also recommendations for giving to individuals full freedom to exercise the right within legal limits of private defence and for boycott of British goods. These last recommendations were not unanimous but unlike the recommendations regarding the lifting of the ban on legislative bodies they did not cause much controversy. The Committee was divided equally on the question of entry into the Councils. One set led by Pandit Motilal Nehru held that Non-co-operators should contest the election to the Councils on the issue of the redress of the Bengal and Khilafat wrongs and immediate Swaraj and in the case of their being returned in a majority large enough to prevent a quorum, they should after taking their seats leave the Council Chamber in a body and take no part in the proceedings, attending occasionally only

for the purpose of preventing vacancies. In case they had a majority they were to oppose every measure of the Government including the Budget and only move resolutions for the redress of the aforesaid wrongs and the attainment of immediate Swaraj. In case of being returned in a minority they were to leave the Council Chamber without causing vacancies. The other party led by Mr. C. Rajgopalachari was of opinion that there should be no change in the programme of the Congress in respect of the boycott of the Councils. Deshabandhu C. R. Das who had been, in the meanwhile, released from jail agreed with the recommendations of Pandit Motilal Nehru.

*The Congress and Council Entry.*—The publication of the Report led to a very prolonged controversy. The All India Congress Committee met in Calcutta on the 20th November, 1922 under the presidency of Deshabandhu Das to consider the report and after a discussion extending over several days ultimately postponed the consideration of the question regarding Council Entry to the next session of the Congress. The Congress met in December at Gaya under the presidency of Deshabandhu Das and the principal question which engaged its attention was naturally the question of Council Entry. The Congress on account of the interest which had been created in the controversy was very largely attended and continued its sessions for five days. It is sufficient to state that it turned down the resolution in favour of Council Entry and maintained the boycott of Councils by a large majority. It is remarkable that in spite of the fact that the most influential and trusted leaders like Deshabandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan lent their powerful support in favour of a change in the original programme by removing the ban on Council Entry, the Congress refused under the advice of a comparatively younger and less known leader Shriji C. Rajagopalachari to countenance any weakening in it.

The controversy, however, did not end with the session of the Congress. Deshabandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and

others formed a Party of those who favoured Council Entry named the Congress-Khilafat-Swarajya Party which came subsequently to be known simply as the Swarajya Party. In the programme of that Party the item which occupied the most prominent place was of course the one relating to Council Entry. It was stated that the party would set up candidates for seats in the Legislative Councils and the Assembly and on being elected they would present on behalf of the country its legitimate demands for acceptance and fulfilment by the Government within a reasonable time. In case the demands were not granted the party would adopt a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a view to make government by the Councils impossible and that in no case would any member of the Party accept office. Other items related to the capture of Municipal, District and Local Boards, organisation of Labour, boycott of British goods, formation of a Federation of Asiatic countries and according support of the party to the constructive programme of the Congress regarding Swadeshi, Khaddar, temperance, untouchability, National education and settlement of disputes by arbitration. Deshabhandhu Das finding himself in a minority in the Congress felt it his duty to tender resignation of his office as President of the Congress and of the All India Congress Committee. The All India Committee, however, did not accept the resignation. As a result of the difference on the Council question the Congress was divided sharply into two different parties which came to be known as the No-change Party which wanted to stick to the programme of the boycott of Councils and the Pro-change or the Swarajya party.

*The Special Congress at Delhi.*—The history of the following nine months is a history of barren controversy and futile attempts at compromises between the pro-changers and no-changers relieved only by one heroic effort at Nagpur under the lead of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj to save and uphold the honour of the National Flag by Satyagraha. This Satyagraha had its origin at Jubbulpore but found its full



play at Nagpur where the Government had prohibited procession with National Flags within the Civil lines. After a struggle of about two months or more in which nearly two thousand persons including Seth Jammalal Bajaj disobeyed the order, courted, and were given, various terms of imprisonment, it came to an honourable close when the Government permitted a large procession to pass through the prohibited area without taking any steps to enforce obedience to its orders.

A special session of the Congress was called to meet at Delhi on the 15th of September, 1923. Moulana Mohamad Ali had in the meantime been released from jail. Mr. Rajagopalachari who had been leading the No-change Party in his absence withdrew himself into the back ground leaving the leadership to Moulana Mohamad Ali. The special Congress met under the presidency of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad and under the guidance of Moulana Mohamad Ali representing the No-change group and Deshabhandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru leading the Swarajya Party passed a resolution according liberty to such Congressmen as had no religious or other conscientious objection to stand as candidates and exercise their right of voting at the ensuing council elections. Thus the Swarajya Party found its way clear to enter the Councils. It is necessary to mention in passing that since the incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi serious differences leading to riots and bloodshed had arisen between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. This is not the place to enter into an examination of the causes which created discord where harmony had existed and which led the two communities to shed each other's blood instead of commingling it in common sacrifice as they had done at Jallianwalla Bagh and during the memorable fight offered by the nation in 1921 which according to Lord Llyod, the Governor of Bombay, had led Indians almost within an ace of winning victory against the mighty British Government. The Hindu-Muslim riots have now become a common feature and even today in August 1927 the incubus is sitting tight on the breast of a prostrate nation. With the close of the Council controversy at Delhi and increas-

ing differences between the Hindu and the Mussalman and a general sense of tiredness among a large body of workers for any effective forward programme, more and more attention came to be given to the work in Councils.

*The Rise of the Swarajists.*—The Delhi special Congress was soon followed by election to the Legislatures and the Swarajya Party set up its candidates to contest the elections and it succeeded remarkably well in the Central Provinces and Bengal. It also captured a substantial number of seats in the Legislative Assembly and in other Councils. In December 1923 the Congress met at Cocanada under the Presidentship of Moulana Mahomed Ali and practically reaffirmed the resolution regarding council entry passed in the Special session at Delhi. The year 1924 opened with the Swarajya Party in the Provincial Legislatures and the Legislative Assembly organising and consolidating its strength in combination with other Nationalist groups and preparing for a fight against the Government in the Councils. The country was, however, convulsed with the news of the serious illness of Mahatma Gandhi in Yarvada Jail, his removal to hospital and operation on him for appendicitis. Some very anxious days were passed but the patient recovered and the Government did not send him back to jail but gave him an unconditional release. In the Assembly the Swarajists were able with the help of other groups to throw out the Finance Bill which however was restored by the Viceroy in virtue of the special powers which he possesses to over-ride the decisions of the Assembly. In the Central Provinces the Council threw out the Budget and practically made the continuance of the ministry under the reformed constitution impossible. The Government, however, could not be made impossible as the constitution reserved ample powers to the Governor to run the administration without the ministers. The Governor in the exercise of such powers practically withdrew the reforms from operation in the Central Provinces. A similar contingency occurred later on in Bengal and in exercise of similar powers the Government

killed the Reforms there also. The work of the Swarajya Party, led as they were with tact and firmness, was creditable and they achieved whatever could be achieved by their tactics under the constitution. But the constitution reserved to the Government the powers of veto and certification and went on using those powers much to the discomfiture of those who had hoped that Government by certification and veto could not last long. We know now that it had lasted at least four years under the reformed constitution and even in small matters of detail where some respect could easily have been shown to the wishes of the Legislature the Government has remained adamant. This is not the place to give a detailed history of the work of the Swarajya Party in Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils. It must be said to their credit that they fought and fought well and tried as best as they could with the members they had at their back to carry on obstruction, but the Constitution left very little room for obstruction and obstruction in a legislature is nothing but co-operation looked at from a different angle of vision.

*Mahatma Gandhi's Release.*—Mahatma Gandhi's recovery and release were naturally hailed with great rejoicing all over the country. People wanted a lead from him. After a long period of convalescence and after anxious conversation with the leaders of the Swarajya Party, Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement reiterating his faith in the original Non-co-operation programme including the boycott of Councils but at the same time recognising the sincerity of those who differed from him on the council question and calling upon those who agreed with him to concentrate their attention on the constructive programme sketched out by him before his incarceration. This statement was followed by another emphasising the need of strengthening the Congress organisation by insisting on having only those on the Congress Executive who not only believed in but also carried out in their own persons the boycott of Government titles, Government educational institutions, Government Law Courts and

Government Councils and who further gave practical demonstration of their adherence to the constructive programme as, for example, by spinning. A meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held in June 1924 at Ahmedabad and the suggestions of Mahatma Gandhi were discussed at great length. The attitude of the Swarajya Party was that it was an attempt on his part to exclude them from the Congress executive. He succeeded in getting the resolutions which he proposed passed through the Committee with a majority. But with characteristic generosity he declared that although he was in a majority he was really in a minority and he ultimately had a resolution passed which was in the nature of a compromise with the Swarajya Party. The meeting ended in gloom and Mahatma Gandhi was pained beyond measure to see the disruption of the great movement which he had led—a disruption which had been wrought about as much by those who had thrown out his programme during his absence as by the inactivity, disorganisation and demoralisation of those who yet professed to follow him. A resolution which opened his eyes to the situation more than ever before was the one relating to the murder of an Englishman, Mr. Day, in Calcutta by a Bengalee youth who confessed that he had intended to murder not Day who was innocent but the Commissioner of Police for his activity against the Revolutionary Party. Mahatma Gandhi was in favour of condemning such political murders as opposed to the creed of non-violence which had been accepted by the Congress. The resolution of condemnation was passed by the All India Congress Committee but the discussion which preceded the vote showed the extent to which a considerable number of the members differed from Mahatma Gandhi in their belief in the creed of Non-violence. He at one time expressed a desire to withdraw from the Congress and to organise the country independently according to his own ideas but he ultimately rejected this and continued to work within the Congress. His subsequent conduct had been one of gradual withdrawing from the active politics of the Congress and intensive concentra-

tion on the constructive programme, particularly hand-spinning. His endeavour has been to keep himself in the background without in any way weakening the Congress or the Swarajya Party.

*Hindu-Muslim Tension.*—The Ahmedabad meeting was preceded and followed by serious Hindu-Muslim riots in many places, the most harrowing amongst them being at Kohat. Mahatma Gandhi tried his best to stem the rising tide and ultimately on the 18th of September, 1924, he began a twenty-one days' fast at Delhi as a penance for Hindu-Muslim quarrels and made an appeal for unity. This created a great sensation and a Unity Conference was immediately called which was attended not only by Hindu and Mussalman delegates but also by the Metropolitan of India and by the representatives of other communities. It continued its deliberations for several days and passed several resolutions laying down principles of toleration and detailed instructions regarding composition of differences arising out of observance of rites by members of different communities. If only the resolutions had been acted upon by all concerned the history of India during the last three years could have been differently written. But alas! the wave of reconciliation which the memorable fast had caused was short lived and India became once again the playground of conflicting gusts of communal passions which resulted in numerous riots all over the country. To-day one feels as if walking upon a powder magazine and no place can be said to be safe from the risks of a communal upheaval. The worst passions have been roused by the preachings and propaganda of a class of unscrupulous men. To the frenzy of a religious homicide Swami Shradhanand, one of the most devoted and unselfish workers and most loved and respected leaders of the Hindus fell a victim in December, 1926 in circumstances of most cowardly treachery while lying in his sick-bed.

*The Suspension of Non-co-operation.*—The fast was shortly followed by what was nothing short of a revival of the Rowlatt

Act in the form of an Ordinance issued by Lord Reading on the 25th October authorising arrest and detention without warrant or trial of persons on mere suspicion and it was quickly acted upon by the arrest of a large number of persons in Bengal including Mr. Subas Chandra Bose who was then the Chief Executive officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Many of them are still in Jail suffering all kinds of ill-treatment like common felons. Mr. Subas Chandra Bose has recently been released on account of serious illness. One effect of this ordinance was to combine all parties in its condemnation. There was a Pact between Mahatma Gandhi and Swarajists whereby it was recommended to the Congress which was to be held in the following December at Belgaum that in order to bring about unity amongst all parties the programme of Non-co-operation as a National Programme should be suspended except in regard to the boycott of foreign cloth. It was also recommended that the Congress work be divided into different departments, and the Swarajya Party be treated as the department for work in the Council. Hand-spinning and wearing of hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar at Congress functions was to be made a qualification for Congress membership. The Congress which met at Belgaum in December was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi and a resolution practically confirming the Pact and formally suspending the programme of Non-co-operation as the National Programme was passed by it. The Swaraj Party with its Council Programme became the predominant party in the Congress and its subsequent history is the history of controversy between two sections of its members, one insisting on obstruction within the Legislatures and non-acceptance of offices within the gift of the Government such as ministerships and the other demanding a logical extension of the principle and policy which had led them out of boycott into the Councils. The other Party which has come to be known as the Responsive Co-operation Party and is led by the Maharashtra group under Mr. N.C. Kelkar insists upon the acceptance of offices also wherever necessary and useful to advance the Nationalist cause.

The Congress which met in December 1925 at Cawnpore witnessed a clear-cut division between the orthodox Swarajists and the Responsive Co-operationists. The Swaraj Party in the course of the year lost its great leader Deshabandhu C. R. Das who expired on 16th June, 1925 at Darjeeling casting a gloom all over the country. Pandit Motilal Nehru who succeeded to the leadership of the Party was able to carry the country with him and induced the Congress at Cawnpore in spite of influential opposition of the Responsivist group to take over the responsibility of running election and laying down the programme of work in Councils. The elections to the Legislatures which thus took place in 1926 were contested not only by Independents and Liberals but also by two antagonistic groups among Congressmen, the one representing the Swaraj Party which had for all practical purposes merged in the Congress and the other representing the Responsivists. The result has been that while the Congress group has succeeded in many places it is nowhere strong enough by itself to carry out effective obstruction or to prevent the formation of Ministry. The Responsivists too are not strong enough to form a Ministry of their own unaided but they have formed a Ministry in Central Provinces in combination with other groups. It is yet too early to pass any judgment on their achievements. The Congress which met in December 1926 at Gauhati practically endorsed the Swarajist programme for work in the Councils.

*The Khilafat Question.*—In bringing to a close this short history of Non-co-operation movement—its causes, progress and effects, it is necessary to mention that the Khilafat question which along with the redress of the Punjab wrongs and the attainment of Swaraj had been one of its immediate causes, was after a good deal of diplomatic moves, manoeuvres and negotiations ultimately set at rest by the victory of the Turks against the Greeks which enabled the Turks to establish a strong republic under Mustapha Kemal Pasha with its capital at Angora after the deposition of the Sultan and the abolition of the Khilafat. The

holy places of Islam at Hedjas have also passed out of the control of non-Muslims or their proteges by the victories of Sultan Ibn Saud against Sherif Huzain who during the Great War had revolted against the Khalifa and had joined the allies.

*Satyagraha as a Practical Weapon.*—This narrative will not be complete without a brief reference to some instances of practical application of Satyagraha, which is the flower and fruit of Non-co-operation to the solution of our pressing problems. The Sikhs being dissatisfied with the condition of their religious institutions known as Gurudwaras which had large endowments started an intensive propaganda for their reform. That campaign consisted in the capture of the Gurudwaras by the Reformed Party known as Akalis and brought them into collision with the Government which supported established Mahants. The Akalis offered Satyagraha and with singular adherence to non-violence suffered not only imprisonment in their thousands and for long terms, confiscation of property and even shooting but also undescrivable horrors at the hands of the Police who mercilessly beat them until they were left unconscious at the places allotted to them for Satyagraha. The Akali struggle exhibits the strength of their faith in the justice of their cause, a deeply religious conviction, a perfectly disciplined organisation, a grim determination to suffer without retaliating and the ultimate triumph of their cause. It shall ever shine as a memorable application of the principles of Satyagraha and its unfailing effect.

No less striking applications of the same principle were seen at Vykom in South India and in the Borsad Taluka in Gujerat. The Vykom Satyagraha was started for removing the restrictions imposed upon the so-called un-touchables prohibiting them from walking along certain roads near temples. The Volunteers who came from all strata of society carried out the struggle and ultimately succeeded in getting the road opened but not before they had undergone considerable suffering. The Borsad Satyagraha was a practical essay in non-payment of taxes by the inhabitants of a whole Taluka comprising about a



hundred villages. A free-booter was at large committing dacoity and loot and the police were unable to capture him. On the pretext that the residents of these villages were sheltering him an additional Police Force was posted and the costs for its maintenance amounting to about two and a half lakhs were ordered to be realised from the inhabitants. They refused to pay the unjust imposition and the Government, being unable to realise it by sequestration and sale of the property of the inhabitants among whom none could be found to purchase them at auction sales held for the purpose or even to remove them to a place where they could be sold, was compelled to withdraw the imposition.

Even to-day Satyagraha is being resorted to in two distant places on two distinct issues. At Patukhali in Eastern Bengal Hindus have been carrying on Satyagraha by courting imprisonment for more than a year to enforce their right to play music on public roads and take religious processions past mosques. At Nagpur, in the Central Provinces, Satyagraha is resorted to for getting a repeal of the "lawless laws" under which a large number of Bengalis are detained in jails without trial or charge in any law court under orders of the Executive Government. The form this Satyagraha is taking is to disobey the Arms Act by carrying arms without license.

*Back to the Constructive Programme.*—With the formal suspension of the Non-co-operation programme Non-co-operation may be said to have waned; but it is alive and the spirit is seen working in different directions. Satyagraha has come to stay: only observance of the very strict rules within which alone it can be worked successfully and effectively is not yet as widely understood as it should be. The Non-co-operation movement came like a huge flood of the Ganges carrying everything before it. It came quickly but it disappeared also quickly, principally because its basic principles and their implications were not fully grasped. There is no doubt that it carried along with it a great deal of filth also but that could not be avoided, and to-day after seeing it rise and subside

one feels that while it has thrown on the surface much that was unhealthy and dirty it has left behind it a silt which is the very salt of the earth and has given to the Indian soil a fertility that was never there at any time during the British occupation of India. The shoots arising out of the soil made so fertile are seen in thousands of homes which had become desolate in the shape of little spinning wheels. They are being carefully tended by Mahatma Gandhi who started an association known as the All India Spinners Association in 1925 for the purpose of developing hand-spinning unhampered by changes in political opinions and yet as an integral part of the Congress which claims to represent not only the rich and the middle classes but also the very poorest of the land. These young shoots are being watered by the sweat and sacrifice of hundreds of men and women all over the country who are giving all their time to the revival of this ancient and vital handicraft of India. They are prospering under the sunshine of the smile of the people who are coming to realise more and more that the economic salvation of a country like India where 80 p. c. of the population lives on agriculture alone can be found only through a cottage industry which can supply them a commodity universally in demand and which can at the same time be worked by the people in their off-hours without giving up their agricultural work. The progress that has been made in reviving this ancient handicraft is recorded in the pages of *Young India* from week to week, and considering the difficulties in its way, the competition it has to face against cheaper mill made cloth—Indian and foreign, the general apathy and in some cases even, open hostility it has to contest against the progress has been truly marvellous and gives ample cause for hope for its future.

*A Critical Phase.*—While these lines are being written, India is passing through a most critical phase of depression. The Hindu-Muslim tension is deep and wide-spread. There are numerous parties and groups in the political field pulling in all possible directions. The Government has been

consolidating its power in the legislatures by winning over the weaker and more "reasonable" members and has not been over scrupulous in showing its strength against popular demands. But dark as the horizon is, it is not without its silver lining.

Efforts are being made to solve the apparently insoluble Hindu-Muslim problem. The question in its political aspect is sought to be solved on the basis of an understanding abrogating separate electorate for Mussalmans on certain conditions and safeguarding the political rights of minorities. The religious differences are sought to be solved on the basis of the resolutions which were unanimously adopted by delegates of all communities at the Unity Conference at Delhi during Mahatma Gandhi's fast. Unity amongst political parties is sought to be brought about by recognising that in spite of differences in respect of details and methods, all are agreed on the fundamental question of the attainment of Swaraj by India and that even in the matter of methods of work in the Councils and in the country it should not be impossible for the parties to adjust their differences and evolve a common programme of work, now that non-co-operation has been suspended by the Congress.

Whatever form that common programme may take, it must be based on a clear recognition of the bed-rock fact that Indians can win their way to freedom only by service and sacrifice. India, weak, divided, disorganised and demoralised, cannot attain and retain Swaraj. India, pure, strong, united, organised and determined, cannot be kept from Swaraj in spite of the best and the worst that England can do against her. The aim of *Young India* has been to build up that strength, purity, unity, organisation and determination, and may it continue under Mahatma Gandhi to inspire the nation and lead it to victory!

27th August, 1927

RAJENDRA PRASAD.

### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In this the second volume of *Young India*, Mahatma Gandhi's writings in his journal from the years 1924 to 1926 have, with his permission and blessings, been collected, edited and brought together in book form on the lines adopted in the first volume.

The period to which these articles relate was one of grave trial for the Non-co-operation Movement; many who joined it in the first flush of enthusiasm wavered; several broke away from it; a few turned definitely hostile. This revolt, on the part of not a few who had proclaimed themselves to be his followers, from the hard discipline which his method of securing national salvation involves, was, of course, a disappointment to Mahatma Gandhi: but, as the writings embodied in this volume will show, he stands unnerved by these developments and unshaken in his faith in Satyagraha; in the need, however hard it be, for the upliftment of the masses by conscious striving on the part of the classes; and in those trying tasks such as the universalisation of the use of the spinning wheel by which alone, he holds, national solidarity may be secured and national prosperity promoted.

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## PREFATORY NOTE TO THE FIRST VOLUME

WITH the incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi, his writings in *Young India* have passed beyond the pale of polemical politics and entered the realm of the "classic" literature. Far more than their practical value to India, at present or hereafter, is their value to the world at large, embodying in them a philosophy of life and practical conduct elaborated by the experience of the lifetime of a soul which will undoubtedly rank in history as that of one of the world's greatest of men.

A few isolated articles are all that have so far been published in book form and the need for a systematic collection of *all* the articles, numbering hundreds, and their presentation in a carefully edited form, is the justification for this publication. The task of editing has not been easy. To have arranged the articles in a wholly chronological order would perhaps have been preferred by the few close followers of *Young India* who till recently have been comparatively few. On the other hand, the by far more numerous lay readers who pay serious and systematic attention to the writings for the first time—and their number is bound to grow—prefer, as experience proves, a logical arrangement. A wholly logical arrangement would, however, have required an amount of editing which would have been incompatible with the publisher's desire not to tamper with the original in any way. The result is a compromise whereby while the articles are sorted and grouped under ten sections, so as to facilitate the study of particular subjects, they are, within these sections, arranged exactly as they appeared in *Young India*. In all cases, where to have given the whole article would only have been unduly burdening the book, the articles have been carefully summarised and given as footnotes in appropriate places. As far as possible, even observations by the way, though on topics of but momentary interest, have

wherever they are in the nature of valuable *obiter dicta*, been also included. All endeavour has thus been made to give in this one volume the valuable writings of Mahatmaji and others in *Young India* from the date of its first publication in Ahmedabad, 1919 to the date of his imprisonment in 1922. Throughout, the writings have been approached as an earnest and reverent student in search solely of Truth would have done, so that the collection might be a reliable account of the Mahatmaji's views to all who desire seriously to study them.

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# YOUNG INDIA

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3rd April, 1924

FOR THE READERS PAST AND PRESENT OF  
'YOUNG INDIA'

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is not without much hesitation that I resume the editorship of *Young India*. I do not know whether my health can yet sustain the energy required for conducting the paper. But I cannot foresee. I can only dimly understand God's purpose in bringing me out of my retirement in Yerowada. In taking up the editorial control of *Navajivan* and *Young India* I am following the Light as far I see it.

Nor have I any new message to deliver to the reader. I had hoped for release by an act of a Swaraj Parliament and to be able to take my humble share in serving Free India. That was not to be.

We have yet to attain freedom. I have no new programme. My faith in the old is just as bright as ever if not brighter. Indeed one's faith in one's plans and methods is truly tested when the horizon before one is the blackest.

Though therefore so far as my mind can perceive, there will be no new method or policy developed in the pages of *Young India*, I hope they will not be stale.

*Young India* will be stale when Truth becomes stale. I want to see God face to face. God I *know* is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence—*Ahimsa*—love. I live for India's freedom and would die for it, because it is part of Truth. Only a free India can worship the true God. I work for India's freedom because my Swadeshi teaches me that being born in it and having inherited her culture, I am fittest to serve *her* and *she* has a prior claim to my service. But my patriotism is not exclusive ; it is calculated not only not to hurt any other nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world.

But if it is not to be such a menace, the means adopted for gaining it must be strictly non-violent. My interest in India's freedom will cease if she adopts violent means, for their fruit will be not freedom but slavery in disguise. And if we have not yet attained our freedom, it is because we have not been non-violent in thought, word and deed. It is true that non-violence has been adopted as policy *i.e.* because we are convinced that by no other means can *India* achieve her freedom. Our policy is not, must not be, a camouflage. We may not harbour violence under cover of non-violence. Whilst we claim to be non-violent for a particular purpose and a particular period, our thought and word must accord with our practice for that purpose and that period. Even so does an honest gaoler act towards a condemned man. He protects his life at the peril of his own till the date of the extreme penalty. He thinks and speaks of his safety. He is, for the time and the person, non-violent in thought, word and deed.

We pledged ourselves to be non-violent towards

each other and our opponents whether administrators or co-operators. We were to appeal to their hearts and evoke the best in them, not play upon their fear to gain our end. Consciously or unconsciously the majority of us—the articulate portion—have not been true to our pledge. We have been intolerant towards our opponents. Our own countrymen are filled with distrust of us. They simply do not believe in our nonviolence. Hindus and Mussulmans in many places have provided an object lesson not in non-violence but in violence. Even the ‘changers’ and the ‘no-changers’ have flung mud against one another. Each has claimed the monopoly of truth and with an ignorant certainty of conviction sworn at the other for his helpless stupidity.

The pages of *Young India* can only, therefore, illustrate the utility and the necessity of non-violence in dealing with the questions that engage public attention. So much for the central policy of *Young India*.

A word as to the business side.\* Some of the readers till recollect that I announced that when at the instance of Mr. Shankerlal Banker and other friends I took up the

\* In *Young India* of 15th May, 1924, Mahatma Gandhi wrote under the heading ‘*Young India*’ and ‘*Navajivan*’ :—A correspondent writes to me about the donation for Khaddar production, of the profits of Rs. 50000 of the Navjivan Press, and says that the profits show that the prices of the weeklies could have been considerably reduced so as to make them available to a larger public. I give below extracts from the letter.

“Recently an announcement was made in the Press that the Navajivan Press had made a profit of about Rs. 50000—and that sum was to be spent in some charitable purposes. This shows that by the grace of God the Press is not in loss and the management is to be congratulated on that account.

But I and many others in this line fail to understand why the price of the paper of 8 pages with such rough paper is so very

editing of *Young India*, I told the public that it was run at a loss and that I would be obliged to give it up if the

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exorbitant in spite of the low cost of paper prevalent at present. Two annas for a copy of 'Young India' is too much for the general reading public of India, and 'Navajivan' for as. 1¼ is also too much. India is a very poor country and that is an acknowledged fact. If they are making profits, is it not fair that their prices should be decreased and thus make them available for the big masses?

In this connexion I may say that the noteworthy English weeklies such as 'Saturday Review,' 'The Nation and Athenaeum,' 'The American Nation,' 'The Spectator' etc., are far cheaper even at the rate of 6d., since they contain more than three times the number of pages. If it is not possible to decrease the price of the weeklies under your control, can you not conveniently manage to increase the number of pages?

Some of us would believe that even if the 'Young India' and 'Navajivan' are sold at 2 to 3 pice, they will not be under loss so long as they are edited by your goodself. If you think that you owe an explanation to the public in this connexion you may explain this through your paper.

Now suppose that the papers are not making profits nor are likely to make any even at the prevailing prices of as. 2 and as. 1¼, can you not manage to put some amount of the profit of the Press in these papers and thus make them cheap?"

I have consulted the manager about the subject-matter of the letter and both he and I have come to the conclusion that the prices could not be safely reduced for the following reasons:—

1. Profits are a precarious item.
2. Reduction of the prices will make no difference in the number of subscribers.
3. The masses do not count as readers because they cannot read.
4. My editing, though it has somewhat increased the number of subscribers, has not made any material increase. The papers are by no means as popular as they were before because perhaps of the subsidence of excitement. *Young India* and *Hindi Navajivan* have not yet begun to pay their way and unless English readers of *Young India* and Hindi readers of *Hindi Navajivan* interest themselves in the

loss continued. I do not believe in publishing newspapers indefinitely at a loss or by means of advertisements. If a paper supplies a felt want, it must pay its way. The subscription list however ran up steadily week by week and it began to yield profits. But during the last two years as the reader is aware the list has fallen from 21,500 to 3,000 and it is now being run at a loss. Happily *Navajivan* has made up for it. But even that method is wrong. *Young India* must stand on its own bottom or fall. It is likely that if I still retain the personal affection of the old readers, *Young India* will soon pay its way. But I have mentioned the loss not only to acquaint the public with the true state of affairs but also as an introduction to an important announcement.

When Messrs. Banker and Yajnik suggested that  


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 upkeep of these weeklies and secure more subscribers, the question of stopping them may soon arise.

5. It is a bad policy to print a cheap newspaper by making profits from other work. I want the readers to be just as much interested in the upkeep of the papers as the manager and the editor are.

6. It is better that the readers become direct participators in the donation of profits than that they get their paper cheap.

7. If there is a public that does not buy the papers by reason of the prices, it is open to well-to-do subscribers, interested in the circulation of the views and policies advocated in the papers, to order as many copies as they choose and if there is a large demand, lower prices will certainly be quoted for them.

8. In view of the suggestion in clause 7, the question of the high prices is not a matter of moment since the public benefit by every single pie of the profits.

9. The size of the papers cannot very well be increased, if only because I have but limited capacity and the papers have only a limited ambition. The public do not want from me a larger weekly letter than they are getting at present.

the Gujarati *Navajivan* which was then a monthly, should be turned into a weekly and edited by me and when I undertook the responsibility, I announced that it would be given up if it proved a loss and that if there were profits, they would be utilized for some public purpose. *Navajivan* soon became profitable but at the instance of Sheth Jamnalalji, *Hindi Navajivan* was commenced. It too had just begun to pay its way when my arrest took place and the circulation steadily fell. It is now again being issued at a loss. But in spite of these losses the large circulation of *Navajivan* and other publications enable the management to devote Rs. 50,000 to public work. Swami Anandanand who is managing the *Navajivan* press has left it entirely to me to allocate the money and as I know no other and better method of utilising it, I propose to devote the sum through the agency of the Provincial Congress Committee to the spread of the spinning wheel and Khadi in Gujarat including Kathiawad. Preference will be given to their spread among poor women and the suppressed classes. It is due to my co-workers that I should inform the public that with some of them the work is a labour of love. Where they receive payment, it is just enough for their wants. The result of such work is before the public. I know that if from the sweeper upward I could secure selfless workers, with the efficient management I have the good fortune to have to-day, it would be possible to show a better surplus.

I should also like to add that if *Young India* again shows profits, as it did before my imprisonment, they will be distributed for All-India work. If any profits are derived from *Hindi Navajivan*, they will be devoted to the spread of Hindi.

I  
NATIONAL UNITY





10th April 1924

## CAMPAIGN OF MISREPRESENTATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

At the present moment there seems to be a wilful attempt being made to widen the gulf between Hindus and Mussalmans. Some newspapers, both Hindu and Muslim, are leaving no stone unturned to inflame passions and unfortunately they do not hesitate to resort to exaggeration and even misrepresentation. Where they are not themselves consciously guilty of such methods, they recklessly copy without verification everything in the nature of a sensation that appears in any other newspaper.

One such statement was made with reference to Maulana Mahomed Ali. He was reported to have said that an adulterous Mussalman was better than myself. That there should have been found any person willing to believe such a thing of Maulana Mahomed Ali shows the degree of tension that exists between Hindus and Mussalmans. The reader will find in another column a translation of the two letters\* written by the Maulana,

\*The following are the material portions of the letter addressed by Maulana Mahomed Ali to Swami Shri Shraddhanandji, the letter addressed to *The Tej* being to a similar effect:

Some Mussalman friends have been constantly flinging at me the charge of being a worshipper of Hindus and a Gandhi-worshipper. The real object of these gentlemen was to aliënate from me the Mussalman community, the Khilafat Committee and the Congress, by representing that I had become a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in my religious principles. I had, therefore, on several occasions plainly

one to Swami Shri Shraddhanandji and the other to *Tej*. In my opinion the letters dispose of once for all the calumny against the Maulana that has been going the round of the Press. Enemies of India's freedom have

declared that in the matter of religion, I professed the same beliefs as any other true Mussalman, and as such I claimed to be a follower of the Prophet Mahomed (on him be peace) and not of Gandhiji. And further that since I hold Islam to be the highest gift of God, therefore, I was impelled by the love I bear towards Mahatmaji to pray to God that he might illumine his soul with the true light of Islam. I wish, however, to emphatically declare that I hold that to-day neither the representatives of Islam nor of the Hindu, Jewish, Nazarene or Parsi faiths can present another instance of such high character and moral worth as Gandhiji and that is the reason why I hold him in such high reverence and affection. I deeply revere my own mother, and if contentment and gratefulness under all circumstances be the true meaning of Islam, I claim there is no person, howsoever well versed in religion, who has understood it better than she. Similarly I regard Maulana Abdul Bari as my religious guide. His loving kindness holds me in bondage. I deeply admire his sincerity of heart. But inspite of all this, I make bold to say that I have not yet found any person who in actual character is entitled to a higher place than Mahatma Gandhi.

But between belief and actual character there is a wide difference. As a follower of Islam I am bound to regard the creed of Islam as superior to that professed by the followers of any non-Islamic religion. And in this sense the creed of even a fallen and degraded Mussalman is entitled to a higher place than that of any other non-Muslim irrespective of his high character, even though the person in question be Mahatma Gandhi himself.

At Lucknow, when just before the commencement of my speech, some one placed a printed copy of the question in reference in my hand for reply (copies of which had also been freely distributed among the audience) I had stated that I did not want to answer any such questions, as I did not consider that any one, unless he could prove that he bore a greater affection towards Mahatmaji than I did was entitled to charge me with having reviled him. It was only when I was told that the point at issue was not that I had reviled

not hesitated to distort the Maulana's statement and use it for the purpose of setting the Hindus against the Maulana Saheb. I venture to commend his letters to the attention of every thoughtful Hindu. The letters in my humble opinion demonstrate the transparent honesty of the Maulana.

What is the original statement which has been so cruelly distorted by some newspapers? He says in effect that the creed of Islam is better than my creed. Is there anything offensive in the statement? So long as there are different religions, is not the Maulana's position the only logical and honest one? I have very dear Christian friends in South Africa and in India. They pray for light for me. One of them, a retired solicitor of standing in South Africa, urges me to accept Jesus Christ and his salvation. He says that without that all my effort will be useless. Thousands of Christians certainly hold that a righteous man without belief in Jesus Christ is less than an adulterous Christian. Does an orthodox Hindu fare better? If he does, why is there all this

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Mahatmaji, but that I had reviled the Hindu religion, that I gave the above-stated reply. A report of my speech had appeared in the *Hamdam* at that time, i. e., about one month back. I had said further therein that every Christian believed that a Christian, however degraded or fallen, was entitled to a higher place in regard to the matter of belief as contra-distinguished from actual character than any Mussalman or Jew, irrespective of his high character and the same was the case with Hindus or followers of any other religion. My reply proved so satisfactory that as I have already mentioned a Hindu friend shouted out that 22 crores of Hindus were prepared to stand by me and several Hindu members of the audience acclaimed it with cries of *Bande Mataram*, *Allaho Akbar*, while the persons who had brought the printed copies of the question were completely silenced.

feverish agitation regarding Shuddhi? In making the choice of a husband for his daughter, will he choose the best character irrespective of religion or the best man in his own sect\*? And if he will restrict the choice to his own circle, does it not show that he too like the Maulana believes that his creed is the best of all?

\* Writing in *Young India* of 24th under the heading "*What is Hinduism?*", Mahatma Gandhi wrote in reply to a correspondent who took exception to the marriage analogy:

I adhere to the marriage illustration chosen by me, though I now see that it would have been better for me to have avoided it. It is not a conclusive illustration. There are, I admit, with my critics many reasons for confining the choice of a husband to a particular class. But I do claim that the predominant reason for excluding the best man if he happens to belong, as he often does, to another class or caste is his creed. A Brahmin parent chooses a Brahmin as a husband for his daughter because he prefers the general body of opinion which may be called creed held by his clan. Underlying the preference is no doubt the belief that acceptance of a creed ultimately involves practice in accordance with it. A narrow creed if it is honestly believed has necessarily a limited field for practice. A creed for instance that makes it obligatory to offer human sacrifice will never free the believer from the taint of religious murder unless he gives up the creed. Thus it is that we find people otherwise most moral disappointing us when they fall short of the highest because of their narrow creed. Many sincere and otherwise noble-minded Hindus consider untouchability as a part of the Hindu creed and would therefore regard the reformers as outcastes. If untouchability was a part of the Hindu creed, I should decline to call myself a Hindu and most decidedly embrace some other faith if it satisfied my highest aspirations. Fortunately for me, I hold that untouchability is no part of Hinduism. On the contrary it is a serious blot upon it, which every lover of it must sacrifice himself to remove. Suppose, however, I discovered that untouchability was really an integral part of Hinduism, I should have to wander in the wilderness because the other creeds as I know them through their accepted interpreters would not satisfy my highest aspirations.

The Maulana has stated the religious law in picturesque language and feeling safe, as he had a right to do, that I could not be offended, he chose me as one of his best Hindu friends for his illustration and showed that his creed he held superior to persons, no

My correspondent accuses me of the crime of using the ambiguous middle in that I have confused Truth and non-violence with the Hindu creed. The crime is deliberate. It is the good fortune or the misfortune of Hinduism that it has no official creed. In order therefore to protect myself against any mis-understanding I have said Truth and non-violence is my creed. If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: search after Truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe even in God and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after Truth and if to-day it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before. Of course, therefore, Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions. Its creed is all-embracing. But that is to claim superiority for the Hindu creed over all the other creeds of the world. As I write these lines, I feel a crowd of sectarians whispering to me, "That is no Hinduism you are defining, come to us and we will show you the Truth." I am confounding all these whisperers by saying *Neti Neti* 'not that, my friends not that', and they make confusion worse confounded by retorting with redoubled fury. 'Not that, not that.' But still another voice whispers to me, "Why all this duelling—this war of words? I can show you a way out of it. It lies through silent prayer." For the moment I propose to listen to that voice and observe silence and ask my friends to do likewise. Possibly I have failed to convince them and their co-sharers in their opinion. If I have failed to convince, it is because I have not seen the light. I can give my assurance that I have not indulged in special pleading in order to defend Maulana Mahomed Ali. If I discover my error, I hope I shall have the courage to own it. The Maulana needs no defence from me. And I should be a false friend, if in order to defend him I sacrificed an iota of truth. It is the special privilege of a friend to own the other's faults and redeclare his affection in spite of faults.

matter how dear they might be to him. I hold that he deserves to be honoured for the staunchness of his faith rather than be accused of coldness for a friend or disrespect for the latter's creed.\*

Nor need his prayers for me that I should find it in my heart to accept Islam cause any alarm or surprise. He would not be a true friend if he did not wish the best (according to his belief) for me. My creed is truth and non-violence in their extreme form. I may be wrong. But if I wish well to my friends I cannot but wish that they may have the same creed so long as I continue to believe it to be the best. I remain within the Hindu fold because it stands best the test laid down by my creed.

The Swamiji in his note whilst heartily and unreservedly accepting the Maulana's letter remarked that his creed made no difference between practice and profession as the Maulana's appeared to him to do. The second letter of the Maulana clears up the point and clinches the whole argument when he says that his creed too does not divorce practice from profession. He

\* Writing in *Young India* of 15th May, 1924 on "several ably argued letters" received by him questioning his defence of Maulana Mahomad Ali, Gandhiji wrote under the caption "A Full Stop": I do not share the opinion expressed by one of the correspondents that the Maulana has betrayed ill-will against Hindus and that there is no chance now of Hindu-Muslim union. That union is coming in spite of the present ferment and in spite of us all. Even if the Maulana was not a lover of the union but its enemy in disguise the position will not be altered. We are but straws in the hands of God. He can blow us where He pleases. We cannot oppose His will. He has made us all to unite, not to remain apart for ever. I wish I could infect my correspondents with my hope and faith. Then they will find no cause for distrusting the Maulana.

adds that in his letter he merely compared the world's creeds as creeds and gave his opinion that his was the best. Could he do otherwise and still be a Mussalman? If he thought otherwise, would he not then as an honest man be bound to profess the creed he considered better than that of Islam?

I hope that the heart of every true Hindu will go out to Mahomed Ali when in the midst of his domestic bereavement and the sickness of his great brother he is trying his utmost to heal the breach between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Surely Hindus who strive for unity have enough fanaticism within to recognise that Mussalman co-workers fare no better.

The other incident is reported to have occurred in the Tibbya College. I asked my son to write to Dr. Ansari to let me know what actually did happen. I quote his reply in full except six words which give the name of the newspaper which has been offending against the law of self-restraint and verification. I omit the name because the purpose is not to select newspapers for criticism but to find a remedy for the disease that has become rampant in the Press. Dr. Ansari writes :

"The incident in the Tibbya College is a very petty one. On the day of the celebration of Mahatmaji's birthday in the Tibbya College one of the speakers compared him to Jesus Christ to which a Muslim student took exception and observed that no living person, however eminent in all respects, should be compared to prophets. Some of the students protested against the Muslim student's remark upon which the latter tried to explain what he had meant and regretted that he was misunderstood. This is the whole story and it is evidently absurd to suggest that members of the staff were involved in it or that there was the slightest likelihood of a breach of peace.

"The papers which you mention are extremely partisan ones whose characteristic feature it is to purvey news calculated to set one community against the other and to present trifling incidents in



a very highly exaggerated form. It would not have been so very sad if these papers alone were to blame because they are neither important nor well-known. But the misfortune is that the spirit of animosity is swaying almost all the vernacular papers—Hindu and Muslim—in Northern India.

“Nor are the incidents referred to by you the only ones in reporting which these papers have betrayed such a deplorable and narrow-minded bigotry. Blind fanaticism and a reprehensible desire to run the other community down by every means has to-day become an essential part of the life of a vernacular paper of Northern India.”

The newspaper readers know the exaggerated manner in which the incident has been described. The Muslim student who took exception to the comparison was after all justified in so doing.\* It is not necessary

\* In reply to Mr. Ghanashyam Jethanand, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of 24th April 1924: If I felt shy or awkward, I might not have noticed the incident, but I would not even out of modesty, false or otherwise, mislead the reader and thus deviate from the ethics of journalism which requires a fearless expression of true opinion. It will not be denied that to say what offends another is against ethics and certainly against spirituality if the saying is not required in the interest of truth. I hardly think it can be argued that it was in the interest of truth to make the comparison referred to. Whilst I think that such comparisons are undesirable, I admit that to object to them when they are actually made may be a mark of intolerance. But the Muslim student, knowing how it wounded many Mussalmans, rightly objected. He showed his good sense by apologising when his objection offended the Hindu student. We would but feed the fire of intolerance if we insist, in the name of freedom of opinion, on expressing those opinions which are likely to wound some. I may inform Mr. Ghanashyam that shortly before I was in prison a devout Hindu wrote a letter strongly protesting against my being compared to Krishna and Rama. I certainly agreed with my correspondent that such comparisons should not be made. I can fully sympathise with orthodox Vaishnavas feeling offended at comparisons which outrage their religious sense. What I plead for is extreme and delicate consideration for the feelings and susceptibilities of others.

for the purpose of honouring a man to compare him with any other honoured man much less with revered prophets. The information Dr. Ansari gives about the vernacular press in Northern India is calculated to cause alarm and anxiety. It is to be hoped that the papers which make a living out of sensations will put patriotism and truth before their pockets. I have heard it suggested that Muslim editors say they will cease to revile Hindus and Hinduism when the Hindu editors leave off reviling Islam and Mussalmans. Hindu editors want to reverse the process. I suggest that both make the desired improvement simultaneously.

I do not wish to suggest that truth should be hushed. There has been that kind of indelicate delicacy before now. What is necessary however is that whilst truth may be fearlessly told, exaggeration and innuendoes should be scrupulously avoided.

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*1st May, 1926.*

## THE STARVING MOPLAH

BY M. K. GANDHI

I gladly print the following from Mr. Yakub Hasan:—

I enclose a copy of the statement I have lately issued to the Press about Moplah Relief. You will no doubt be grieved to learn that thousands of women and children belonging to the Moplahs who were killed in the rebellion or were shot or hanged afterwards or are undergoing long imprisonment, are almost starving.

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If, in the name of tolerance, we began to swear at one another's deities, we would be copying the fabled economist who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs.

Moplahs as a class have always been poor. Most of them were cultivating lands under the petty landlords called Jennies, who are almost all Hindus. The oppression of the Jennies is a matter of notoriety and a long standing grievance of the Moplahs that has never been redressed though unsuccessful attempts were made several times to ease the situation by means of legislature. The rebellion has reduced the poverty-stricken Moplah community to still lower depths of destitution. The forcible conversions have placed the community in bad odour with the Hindus in general and the Jennies in particular, and the Government has also no love for the people who have not long ago fought pitched battles with it. Hindus have had their vengeance through the Military who burnt the Moplah houses and their Mosques wholesale. Thousands of Moplahs have been killed, shot, hanged or imprisoned for life and thousands are now languishing in jail. Of those who are left behind several thousands are paying fines in monthly instalments in lieu of imprisonments for two years. These people are always under the thumb of the Police. The few who have escaped death, jail or fine are not in any happier condition. They are frightened out of their wits and are constantly living in terror. Some of the people I talked to in the out-of-way places were trembling with fear in spite of the assurance given to them that I was their friend and the object of my visit was only to help them if I can.

This is the general condition of the Moplahs in South Malabar. The condition of the women who have lost husbands and fathers by death or imprisonment is still worse. Unlike their sisters in other parts of India Moplah women do not observe *purdah*. They are intelligent and industrious and always work with their male relations in fields and elsewhere. They are now very much handicapped; for just when the burden of supporting the family is thrown on their shoulders and they are called upon by the untoward circumstances to be the sole bread earners for their families, they find no work that would give them a living wage. Though Moplahs have always been poor still there were no beggars among them. But now it is a common sight to see Moplah women and children in tatters begging in the streets. Among the poor Muslim women who beg in this alms-giving month of Ramzan, I find almost half are Moplah women in Madras, and I am told this is the case in all large cities in this Presidency.

As for children their neglected condition can be more imagined than described.

Something has to be done and done immediately if the Moplah community is to be saved from moral, even physical destruction. In spite of all his faults and shortcomings the Moplah is a fine man. He has the bravery, the pluck and the grit of his Arab father, and the gentleness and the industry of his Nair mother. His religious zeal is more misunderstood than appreciated. He is as a rule peaceful but he brooks no affront to his honour or religion. Unfortunate circumstances, the causes of which I need not enter into on this occasion, forced him into the position of a rebel. He has done what any one, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, under the same circumstances and in the same emergency, would have done in self-defence and self-interest. He has suffered the consequences of his deeds. Should the society also visit his sins on his wife and children?

I place this matter before you, Mahatmaji, because you are the head of the Indian nation, and both Hindus and Mussalmans jointly and severally look upon you as their leader. It is not for me to say how this great problem should be tackled. In your wisdom and goodness of heart you will, God willing, find ways and means to carry life-giving succour to the suffering Moplah women and children. Your appeal will make the Hindus forgive and forget and show that magnanimity of the heart without which no nation can aspire to be great, and your appeal will make Mussalmans realize more fully their duty to themselves. I am sure all the leading men irrespective of caste or creed or political thought will join hands with you in bringing this humanitarian cause home to the people at large.

My appeal must necessarily be to the Hindus.\* I do not know how far it will be successful in the present

\* In *Young India* of May 22, 1924, Gandhiji wrote under the heading, "*Pandit Malaviyaji on Moplah Relief*": The reader will be glad to learn what Pandit Malaviyaji has to say about Moplah relief. The following is the translation of what he says in a letter written to me in Hindi:—

"I agree with every word of what you have written about helping Moplah women and children.

Where is the merit in a man who returns good for good?

The wise call him only good who does good to the evil-doer.

tension between the two communities. But I must not think of the result. I should be guilty of cowardice if I did not publish Mr. Yakub Hasan's letter which commands my sympathy. I know that the Hindus feel sore over what the Moplahs in 1921 did to their Hindu neighbours in Malabar. I know that thousands of Hindus think that the Moplah atrocities were not as strongly condemned by the general body of the Mussalmans as they might have been. I know that many will (as I do) take exception to Mr. Yakub Hasan's sweeping assertion that 'he' (Moplah) has done what any one, Hindu, Muslim or Christian under the same circumstances and in the same emergency would have done in self-defence or self-interest.' No circumstance and no provocation however grave, could possibly justify forcible conversions. I should hope that Mr. Yakub Hasan has not meant to include these among the pardonable acts of the Moplahs.

But even assuming the truth of the worst that the Hindus may have to say against the Moplahs and the contemporaneous or subsequent conduct of the rest of the Indian Mussalmans, I have no doubt that if the

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They alone are good who do good to those that do harm to them;  
And these good souls adorn the earth; for it is the better for  
their birth.

"Please do not infer from the verse quoted by me that in my opinion all Moplahs have injured Hindus. But even assuming that all the Moplahs have done us an injury, even then must we serve them in the hour of their need. In such conduct lies the beauty of our religion.

'Let Love conquer hate.

Let the good conquer the evil-doers.

Let a generous heart conquer avarice.

Let Truth conquer falsehood."

Hindus allowed their prejudices to interfere with their charity towards their countrymen and countrywomen, the starving Moplahs, it would be counted as a sin before the Judgment Seat. We may not remember against posterity the sins of its forefathers. The Moplahs sinned against God and have suffered grievously for it. Let the Hindus also remember that they have not allowed the opportunity of revenge to pass by. Many have done all they could to take reprisals when they got the opportunity.

My point is simple. In face of the awful fact of starvation and homelessness all argument and all opposition must be hushed. Generations hence, when all our evil acts will have been forgotten, posterity will cherish the treasured memory of every simple act of love shown by the one to the other. I, therefore, ask every Hindu reader who will extend the hand of love and fellowship to starving Moplah brothers and sisters and their children, to send his or her mite and I shall endeavour to see that it is properly distributed among the most deserving among the Moplahs.

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*29th May, 1924.*

HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION :  
ITS CAUSE AND CURE

BY M. K. GANDHI

*Hindu Indictment*

Pundit Banarsidas Chaturvedi brought a message from a Hindu residing in Tanganaika to the following effect: "Tell Gandhi he is responsible for the Muslim atrocities in Multan." I did not print the message be

fore, as I was not ready to write then upon the question of questions. But many letters have since been received by me, some from well-known friends, telling me that I was responsible even for the alleged Moplah atrocities, in fact for all the riots in which Hindus have or are said to have suffered since the Khilafat agitation. The argument is somewhat this: 'You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Mussalmans in the Khilafat question. Your being identified with it gave it an importance it would never have otherwise received. It unified and awakened the Mussalmans. It gave a prestige to the Maulvis which they never had before. And now that the Khilafat question is over, the awakened Mussalmans have proclaimed a kind of Jihad against us Hindus.' I have given the purport of the charge in readable language. Some letters contain unprintable abuse.

So much for the Hindu part of the indictment against me.

### *Mussalman Indictment*

A Mussalman friend says:

"The Moslem community being a very simple and religious community were led to believe that the Khilafat was in danger and that it could be saved by the united voice of Hindus and Mahomedans; these innocent people believing your very eloquent words showed great enthusiasm with the result that they were the first to boycott schools, law-courts, Council, etc. The most famous institution of Aligarh, which Sir Syed had built by the labour of his life-time, and which was justly the first institution of its kind, was utterly spoilt. I shall be very much obliged, if you will kindly point out that the Hindu community had a similar institution, and it met with the same fate. I know of scores of boys who could have taken the University degree with credit to themselves and the community to which they belonged, but they were induced to leave studies on religious grounds, with the result that they were utterly ruined. On the con-

trary very few Hindu boys left, and those who did so for the time being instantly joined, as soon as they found that the movement was tottering to pieces. Similar was the case with lawyer. In those days, you brought about a sort of unity between the two communities and advertised it far and near that it was a solid one. The simple-minded Mahomedans again believed it with the result that they were brutally treated at Ajmere, Lucknow, Meerut, Agra, Saharanpur, Lahore and other places. Mr. Mahomed Ali, who was a born journalist of a very high type, and whose wonderful paper, "The Comrade" was doing such solid work for the Muslim community, was won over to your side, and he is now a loss to the community. Your Hindu leaders in the guise of Shuddhi and Sangathan are trying to weaken the Muslim community. Your short-sighted decision to prevent people from entering the Councils has acted most unfairly on this community as the majority of able men refrained from entering the Councils because of the so-called *fatwa*. Under the circumstances, do you not honestly think that you are doing a great harm to this community by keeping the Mahomedans, a few of them of course, still in your camp."

I have not given the whole of the letter. But the extract represents the gist of the Muslim indictment against me.

### *Not Guilty*

I must plead not guilty to both the charges, and add that I am totally unrepentant. Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should have still thrown myself into the Khilafat agitation. In spite of the present strained relations between the two communities, both have gained. The awakening among the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is itself a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again. Our wisdom consists now in directing the awakening in the proper channel. What we see before us is sad but not disheartening, if we have faith in ourselves. The storm is but the forerunner of



the coming calm that comes from a consciousness of strength, not from the stupor of exhaustion and disappointment.

The public will not expect me to give judgment upon the riots in the different places. I have no desire for giving judgments. And even if I had, I have not the facts before me.

### *Moplahs*

I will say a word as to the causes.\*

\* In *Young India* of June 5, 1924, Gandhiji thus summarises his article on the cause and cure of Hindu Muslim Tension :

Let me summarise the long statement issued last week on this the greatest of all questions for the Indian patriot. The posterity will judge both the faiths by the manner in which the followers of each acquit themselves in the matter. However good Hinduism or Islam may be in the abstract, the only way each can be judged is by the effect produced by each on its votaries considered as a whole.

The following then is the summary of the statement.

#### CAUSES

1. The remote cause of the tension is the Moplah rebellion.
2. The attempt of Mr. Fazl Hussain to rearrange the distribution of posts in the education department consistently with the number of Mussalmans in the Punjab and consequent Hindu opposition.
3. The Shuddhi movement.
4. The most potent being tiredness of non-violence and the fear that the communities might by a long course of training in non-violence forget the law of retaliation and self-defence.
5. Mussalman cow-slaughter and Hindu music.
6. Hindu cowardice and consequent Hindu distrust of Mussalmans.
7. Mussalman bullying.
8. Mussalman distrust of Hindu fairplay.

#### CURE

1. The master-key to the solution is the replacement of the rule of the sword by that of arbitration.

Honest public opinion should make it impossible for aggrieved parties to take the law into their own hands and every case must be

The Malabar happenings undoubtedly disquieted the Hindu mind. What the truth is, no one knows. The Hindus say that the Moplah atrocities were indescribable. Dr. Mahmud tells me that these have been grossly exaggerated, that the Moplahs too had a grievance

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referred to private arbitration or to law-courts if the parties do not believe in non-co-operation.

2. Ignorant fear of cowardly non-violence, falsely so called, taking the place of violence should be dispelled.

3. Growing mutual distrust among the leaders must, if they believe in unity, give place to trust.

4. Hindus must cease to fear the Mussalman bully and the Mussalmans should consider it beneath their dignity to bully their Hindu brothers.

5. Hindus must not imagine they can force Mussalmans to give up cow sacrifice. They must trust, by befriending Mussalmans, that the latter will, of their own accord, give up cow sacrifice out of regard for their Hindu neighbours.

6. Nor must Mussalmans imagine they can force Hindus to stop music or *arati* before mosques. They must befriend the Hindus and trust them to pay heed to reasonable Mussalman sentiment.

7. Hindus must leave to the Mussalmans and the other minorities the question of representation on elected bodies, and gracefully and whole-heartedly give effect to the findings of such referee. If I had my way I should appoint Hakim Sahab Ajmalkhan as the sole referee leaving him free to consult Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis etc. as he considers best.

8. Employment under national government must be according to merit to be decided by a board of examiners representing different communities.

9. Shuddhi or Tabligh as such cannot be disturbed but either must be conducted honestly and by men of proved character. It should avoid all attack on other religions. There should be no secret propaganda and no offer of material rewards.

10. Public opinion should be so cultivated as to put under ban all the scurrilous writings principally in a section of the Punjab Press.

against the Hindus, and that he could find no cases of forcible conversions. The one case that was reported to him was at least 'non-proven.' In his findings, Dr. Mahmud says, he is supported by Hindu testimony. I

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11. Nothing is possible without the Hindus shedding their timidity. Theirs is the largest stake and they must be prepared to sacrifice the most.

But how is the cure to be effected? Who will convince the Hindu maniac that the best way to save the cow is for him to do his duty by her and not goad his Mussalman brother? Who will convince the Mussalman fanatic that it is not religion but irreligion to break the head of his Hindu brother when he plays music in front of his mosque. Or again who will make the Hindu see that he will lose nothing by the minorities being even over-represented on the elective public secular bodies? These are fair questions and show the difficulty of working out the solution.

But if the solution is the only true solution, all difficulties must be overcome. In reality the difficulty is only apparent. If there are even a few Hindus and a few Mussalmans who have a living faith in the solution, the rest is easy. Indeed, even if there are a few Hindus only, or a few Mussalmans only with that faith, the solution would be still easy. They have but to work away single-heartedly and the others will follow them. And the conversion of only one party is enough because the solution requires no bargains. For instance, Hindus should cease to worry Mussalmans about the cow without expecting any consideration from the latter. They should yield to the Mussalman demand whatever it may be regarding representation again without requiring any return. And if the Mussalmans insist on stopping Hindu music or *arati* by force, the Hindus will continue playing it although every single Hindu should die at his post but without retaliation. The Mussalmans will then be shamed into doing the right thing in an incredibly short space of time. Mussalmans can do likewise, if they choose, and shame the Hindus into doing the right thing. One has to dare to believe.

But in practice it will not be thus; on the contrary both will act simultaneously as soon as the workers become true to themselves. Unfortunately they are not. They are mostly ruled by passion and

merely mention the two versions to ask the public to conclude with me that it is impossible to arrive at the exact truth, and that it is unnecessary for the purpose of regulating our future conduct.

*Multan etc.*

In Multan, Saharanpur, Agra, Ajmere etc. it is agreed that the Hindus suffered most. In Palwal it is stated that Hindus have prevented Mussalmans from turning a *kachcha* mosque into a *pukka* one. They are said to have pulled down part of the *pukka* wall, driven the Muslims out of the village, and stated that the Muslims could not live in the village unless they promised not to build any mosque and say *azan*. This state of things is said to have continued for over a year. The driven Mussalmans are said to be living in temporary huts near Rohtak.

In Byade in Dharwar district, my informant tells me, on Muslims objecting to music being played before their mosque, the Hindus desecrated the mosque, beat the Mussalmans, and then got them persecuted.

Here again I cite these two instances, not as proved facts, but to show that the Mussalmans too claim to have much to complain of against Hindus.

And it can certainly be fairly added that where they

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prejudice. Each tries to hide the shortcomings of his co-religionists and so the circle of distrust and suspicion ever widens.

I hope that at the forthcoming meeting of the All India Congress Committee, it will be possible to find out a method of work which will bring a speedy end to the tension.

It has been suggested to me that the Government are fomenting these dissensions. I should hope not. But assuming that they are, surely, it is up to us to neutralise such efforts by ourselves acting truly and faithfully.

were manifestly weak and Hindus strong as in Katarpur and Arrah years ago they were mercilessly treated by their Hindu neighbours. The fact is that when blood boils, prejudice reigns supreme; man, whether he labels himself Hindu, Mussalman, Christian or what not, becomes a beast and acts as such.

### *The Seat of the Trouble*

The seat of the trouble, however, is in the Punjab. The Mussalmans complain that the Hindus have raised a storm of protest on Mr. Fazl Hussain trying very timidly to give a fair proportion of Government employment to Mussalmans. The letter, from which I have already quoted complains bitterly that wherever a Hindu has been the head of a department, he has carefully excluded Mussalmans from Government posts.

The causes for the tension are thus more than merely religious. The charges I have quoted are individual. But the mass mind is a reflection of individual opinion:

### *Tired of Non-violence*

The immediate cause is the most dangerous. The thinking portion seems to be tired of non-violence. It has not as yet understood my suspension of Satyagraha after Ahmedabad and Virangam tragedies, then after the Bombay rowdyism, and lastly after the Chauri-Chaura outrage. The last was the last straw. The thinking men imagined that all hope of Satyagraha and therefore of Swaraj too in the near future, was at an end. Their faith in non-violence was skin-deep. Two years ago a Mussalman friend said to me in all sincerity, "I do not believe your non-violence. At least I would not have my Mussalmans to learn it. Violence is the

law of life. I would not have Swaraj by non-violence as you define the latter. I must hate my enemy." This friend is an honest man. I entertain great regard for him. Much the same has been reported of another very great Mussalman friend of mine. The report may be untrue, but the reporter himself is not an untrue man.

### *Hindu Repugnance*

Nor is this repugnance to non-violence confined to Mussalmans. Hindu friends have said the same thing, if possible with greater vehemence. My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe and advocate non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the Gita, when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the Gita under certain circumstances. A very learned Shastri only the other day scornfully rejected my interpretation of the Gita and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the Gita represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them, if we would understand the solution I have to offer.

What I see around me today is, therefore, a reaction against the spread of non-violence. I feel the wave of violence coming. The Hindu-Muslim tension is an acute phase of this tiredness.

I must be dismissed out of consideration. My

religion is a matter solely between my maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do, however, suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions.

*Limited Non-violence*

But I have never presented to India that extreme form of non-violence, if only because I do not regard myself fit enough to redeliver that ancient message. Though my intellect has fully understood and grasped it, it has not as yet become part of my whole being. My strength lies in my asking people to do nothing that I have not tried repeatedly in my own life. I am then asking my countrymen to-day to adopt non-violence as their final creed, only for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of attaining Swaraj. Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of Swaraj must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Mussalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion, if Hindus will kill a Mussalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Mussalman to Hinduism by force. And similarly what is it but compulsion, if Mussalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes.

Again, a nation of three hundred million people should be ashamed to have to resort to force to bring to book one hundred thousand Englishmen. To convert them, or, if you will, even to drive them out of the country, we need, not force of arms, but force of will. If we have not the latter, we shall never get the former. If we develop the force of will, we shall find that we do not need the force of arms.

Acceptance of non-violence, therefore, for the purposes mentioned by me, is the most natural and the most necessary condition of our national existence. It will teach us to husband our corporate physical strength for a better purpose, instead of dissipating it, as now, in a useless fratricidal strife, in which each party is exhausted after the effort. And every armed rebellion must be an insane act unless it is backed by the nation. But almost any item of non-cooperation fully backed by the nation can achieve the aim without shedding a single drop of blood.

I do not say 'eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India.' But in order that we are better able to do so, we must learn to restrain ourselves. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness to take up the pistol on the slightest pretext. Mutual fisticuffs are a training not in violence but in emasculation. My method of non-violence can never lead to loss of strength, but it alone will make it possible, if the nation wills it, to offer disciplined and concerted violence in time of danger.

*Not Truly Non-violent*

If those who believe that we were becoming supine and inert because of the training in non-violence, will



but reflect a little, they will discover that we have never been non-violent in the only sense in which the word must be understood. Whilst we have refrained from causing actual physical hurt, we have harboured violence in our breast. If we had honestly regulated our thought and speech in the strictest harmony with our outward act, we would never have experienced the fatigue we are doing. Had we been true to ourselves we would have by this time evolved matchless strength of purpose and will.

I have dwelt at length upon the mistaken view of non-violence, because I am sure that if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence limited only to the two purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

*The Bully and the Coward*

Unless this elementary condition is recognised, we

have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement. But, assuming that the acceptance of the elementary condition will be common cause between the two communities, let us consider the constant disturbing factors. There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus come out second best. But my own experience confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward.\* I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels

\* Replying to Babu Bhagwan Das in *Young India* of June 19th 1924, who took exception to such statements as that the Hindus were cowards and Muslims the bullies and who suggested that the cause should be traced to the decadent Hindu leader's clinging to untouchability and so on, Gandhiji wrote under the heading, "What may Hindus do"?

Regarding the first two questions the writer has answered them himself. In my opinion, they are only partly true. Though the majority of the Mussalmans of India and the Hindus belong to the same 'stock', the religious environment has made them different. I believe and I have noticed too that thought transforms man's features as well as character. The Sikhs are the most recent illustration of the fact. The Mussalman being generally in a minority has as a class developed into a bully. Moreover being heir to fresh traditions he exhibits the virility of a comparatively new system of life. Though in my opinion non-violence has a predominant place in the Koran, the thirteen hundred years of imperialistic expansion has made the Mussalmans fighters as a body. They are therefore aggressive. Bullying is the natural exorcence of an aggressive spirit. The Hindu has an age old civilisation. He is essentially non-violent. His civilisation has passed through the experiences that the two recent ones are still passing through. If Hinduism was ever imperialistic in the modern sense of the term, it has outlived its imperialism and has either deliberately or as a matter of course given it up. Predominance of the non-violent spirit has restricted the use of arms to a small minority, which must always be subordinate to a

which I had the privilege of settling. Need the Hindu blame the Mussalman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies. They say that in Saharanpur the Mussalmans looted houses, broke

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civil power highly spiritual, learned and selfless. The Hindus as a body are therefore not equipped for fighting. But not having retained their spiritual training, they have forgotten the use of an effective substitute for arms and not knowing their use nor having an aptitude for them, they have become docile to the point of timidity or cowardice. This vice is therefore a natural excrescence of gentleness. Holding this view, I do not think that the Hindu exclusiveness, bad as it undoubtedly is, has much to do with the Hindu timidity. Hence also my disbelief in *Akhadas* as a means of self-defence. I prize them for physical culture but, for self-defence I would restore the spiritual culture. The best and most lasting self-defence is self-purification. I refuse to be lifted off my feet because of the scares that haunt us to-day. If Hindus would but believe in themselves and work in accordance with their traditions, they will have no reason to fear bullying. The moment they recommence the real spiritual training the Mussalman will respond. He cannot help it. If I can get together a band of young Hindus with faith in themselves and therefore faith in the Mussalmans, the band will become a shield for the weaker ones. They (the young Hindus) will teach how to die without killing. I know no other way. When our ancestors saw affliction surrounding them, they went in for *tapasya* purification. They realised the helplessness of the flesh and in their helplessness they prayed till they compelled the Maker to obey their call. 'Oh yes,' says my Hindu friend, 'but then God sent some one to wield arms'. I am not concerned with denying the truth of the retort. All I say to the friend is that as a Hindu he may not ignore the cause and secure the result. It will be time to fight, when we have done enough *tapasya*. Are we purified enough I ask? Have we even done willing penance for the sin of untouchability, let alone the personal purity of individuals? Are our religious preceptors all that they should be? We are beating the air whilst we simply concentrate our attention upon picking holes in the Mussalman conduct. As with the Englishman, so with the Mussalman. If our professions are true, we should

open safes and in one case a Hindu woman's modesty was outraged. Whose fault was this? Mussalmans can offer no defence for the execrable conduct, it is true. But I as a Hindu am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice

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find it infinitely less difficult to conquer the Mussalman than the English. But Hindus whisper to me that they have hope of the Englishman but none of the Mussalman. I say to them, 'if you have no hope of the Mussalman, your hope of the Englishman is foredoomed to failure.'

The other questions can be briefly answered. The Goondas came on the scene because the leaders wanted them. The leaders distrusted one another. Distrust never comes from well-defined causes. A variety of causes, more felt than realised, breeds distrust. We have not yet visualised the fact that our interests are identical. Each party seems vaguely to believe that it can displace the other by some kind of manoeuvring. But I freely confess as suggested by Babu Bhagwandas that our not knowing the kind of Swaraj we want has also a great deal to do with the distrust. I used not to think so, but he had almost converted me before I became Sir George Lloyd's guest at the Yeravada Central Prison. I am a confirmed convert.

The 'points of contact' referred to by me is a phrase intended to cover all social, religious and political relations alike as between individuals and masses. Thus, for instance instead of accentuating the differences in religion, I should set about discovering the good points common to both. I would bridge the social distance wherever I can do so consistently with my religious belief. I would go out of my way to seek common ground on the political field.

As for the referee, I have named Hakim Saheb's name undoubtedly for the universal respect that it carries with it. But I would not hesitate to put the pen even in the hands of a Mussalman who may be known for his prejudices and fanaticism. For as a Hindu, I should know that I have nothing to lose even if the referee gave the Mussalmans a majority of seats in every province. There is no principle at stake in giving or having seats in elective bodies. Moreover experience has taught me to know that undivided responsibility immediately puts a man on his mettle and his pride or God-fearingness sobers him.

than I am angry at the Mussalman bullying. Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions? Where were the relatives of the outraged sister at the time of the outrage? Have they no account to render of themselves? My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life. Those Hindus who ran away to save their lives would have been truly non-violent and would have covered themselves with glory and added lustre to their faith and won the friendship of their Mussalman assailants, if they had stood bare breast with smiles on their lips, and died at their post. They would have done less well though still well, if they had stood at their

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Lastly, no proclamation that we should unite or any such thing will avail unless some of us began to act up to the proclamation even though we may be the fewest possible.

post and returned blow. If the Hindus wish to convert the Mussalman bully into a respecting friend, they have to learn to die in the face of the heaviest odds.

### *The Way*

The way, however, does not lie through Akhadas; not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then they should be for all. But, if they are meant as a preparation for self-defence in the Hindu-Mussalman conflicts, they are foredoomed to failure. Mussalmans can play the same game and such preparations secret or open do but cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no present remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of dangers. So long as parents of the middle class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to transmit their timidity by keeping their grown-up children in cotton wool, so long will there be the desire to shun danger and run no risks. They will have to dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks and even at times get killed in so doing. The puniest individual may have a stout heart. The most muscular Zulus cower before English lads. Each village has to find out its stout hearts.

### *The Goondas*

It is a mistake to blame the goondas. They never do mischief unless we create an atmosphere for them. I was eye witness to what happened in Bombay on the Prince's day in 1921. We sowed the seed and the goondas reaped the harvest. Our men were at their back. I have no hesitation in holding the respectable Mussal-

mans (not all in any single case) responsible for the misdeeds in Multan, Saharanpur and elsewhere, as I have done in holding respectable Hindus responsible for the misdeeds in Katarpur and Arrah. If it is true that at Palwal we have prevented the erection of a *pukka* mosque in the place of a *kachcha* one, it is not the goondas who are doing it, it is the respectable Hindus who must be held accountable. We must resolutely discountenance the practice of absolving the respectable class from blame.

Therefore, I hold that Hindus will commit a grave blunder, if they organise Hindu goondas for defence. From the frying pan they will jump into fire. The Bania and the Brahmin must learn to defend himself even violently, if not non-violently, or surrender his women-folk and possessions to the goondas. They are a class apart, whether they are labelled Mussalman or Hindu. It was said with gusto that protected by untouchables (for they feared not death) a Hindu procession (playing triumphant music) quite recently passed a mosque unhurt.

It is a very mundane use to make of a sacred cause. Such exploitation of our untouchable brothers can neither serve Hinduism in general nor the suppressed classes in particular. A few processions so doubtfully protected may pass a few mosques safely. But it can only aggravate the growing tension, and degrade Hinduism. The middle class people must be prepared for a beating, if they wish to play music in the teeth of opposition, or they must befriend Mussalmans in a self-respecting manner.

The Hindus have to do penance for the past and still continuing disabilities imposed by them upon the

suppressed brothers. There can be no question therefore of expecting any return from them for a debt we owe them. If we use them to cover our cowardice, we shall raise in them false hopes we shall never be able to fulfil and if the retribution comes, it will be a just punishment for our inhuman treatment of them. If I have any influence with Hindus, I would beseech them not to use them as a shield against anticipated Mussalman attack.

*Growing distrust*

Another potent cause of the tension is the growing distrust even among the best of us. I have been warned against Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji. He is suspected of secret motives. It is said that he is no friend of the Mussalmans. He is even credited with being jealous of my influence. I have the privilege of knowing him intimately ever since my return to India in 1915. I have had the privilege of closest communion with him. I regard him as one of the best among Hindus, who though orthodox holds most liberal views. He is no enemy of Mussalmans. He is incapable of jealousy of any one. He has a heart large enough to accomodate even his enemies. He has never aimed at power. And what he has, is due to a long period of unbroken service of the motherland, such as very few of us can boast. He and I are temperamentally different but love each other like brothers. There never has been even so much as a jar between us. Our ways being different, there can be no question of rivalry and therefore jealousy either.

Another one distrusted is Lala Lajpatrai. I have found him to be frank as a child. His record of sacrifice



is almost unequalled. I have had not one but many a chat on the Hindu-Muslim question with him. He is no enemy of the Mussalman. But I confess that he has his doubts about the immediate attainment of unity. He is seeking light from on High. He believes in that unity in spite of himself because, as he told me, he believes in Swaraj. He recognises that without that unity there can be no Swaraj. He only does not know how and when it can be attained. He likes my solution but he doubts if the Hindus will understand and appreciate its nobility (as he calls it). Let me say in passing I do not call my solution noble. I hold it to be strictly just and the only feasible solution.

Swami Shraddhanandji also is distrusted. His speeches are, I know, often irritating. But even he wants Hindu-Muslim unity. Unfortunately he believes in the possibility of bringing every Muslim into the Aryan fold, just as perhaps most Mussalmans think that every non-Muslim will some day become a convert to Islam. Shraddhanandji is intrepid and brave. Single-handed he turned a wilderness into a magnificent boarding college on the banks of the sacred Ganges. He has faith in himself and his mission. But he is hasty and easily ruffled. He inherits the traditions of the Arya Samaj. I have profound respect for Dayanand Saraswati. I think that he has rendered great service to Hinduism. His bravery was unquestioned. But he made his Hinduism narrow. I have read "Satyarth Prakash" the Arya Samaj Bible. Friends sent me three copies of it whilst I was resting in the Yerawada Jail. I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great. He has claimed to stand for truth and nothing less. But he has unconsciously misrepresented Jainism,

Islam, Christianity and Hinduism itself. One having even a cursory acquaintance with these faiths could easily discover the errors into which the great reformer was betrayed. He has tried to make narrow one of the most tolerant and liberal of the faiths on the face of the earth. And an iconoclast though he was, he has succeeded in enthroning idolatry in the subtlest form. For he has idolised the letter of the Vedas and tried to prove the existence in the Vedas of everything known to science. The Arya Samaj flourishes in my humble opinion not because of the inherent merit of the teachings of Satyarth Prakash but because of the grand and lofty character of the founder. Wherever you find Arya-Samajists, there is life and energy. But having the narrow outlook and a pugnacious habit they either quarrel with people of other denominations and failing them with one another. Shraddhanandji has a fair share of that spirit. But, in spite of all these drawbacks, I do not regard him as past praying for. It is possible that this sketch of the Arya Samaj and the Swamji will anger them.\* Needless to say, I mean no offence. I

\* As Gandhiji foresaw, his reference to the Arya Samajists did anger the Samajists. It provoked a storm of protest from the Arya Samajists all over the country. In refusing to retract what he wrote, Mahatma Gandhi observed in *Young India* of June 12, 1924, in the course of a leading article under the heading The "Arya Samajists":

Those who have attributed my statement to my ignorance have done so probably to leave me an open door for a safe retreat. Unfortunately for me, I have left no such chance for myself. I cannot plead ignorance of the 'Satyarth Prakash' or the general teachings of the Arya Samaj. I cannot even say that I might have been prejudiced against the Arya Samaj. On the contrary, I approached it with the greatest veneration. I had, as I still have, profound regard for the personal character of • Rishi Dayanand. His *brahmacharya* was an

love the Samajists for I have many co-workers from among them. And I learnt to love the Swamiji, even while I was in South Africa. And though I know him better now, I love him no less. It is my love that has spoken.

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object of emulation for me. His fearlessness commanded my admiration. And my provincialism, if I have any in me, was flattered by the fact of the Rishi being of the same little Kathiawad as myself. But I could not help myself. The conclusion I came to was in spite of myself, and I published it only when its publication became relevant. Its suppression would have been a cowardly omission on my part. Instead of becoming enraged against me for an honest expression of opinion. I appeal to them to take my criticism in good part, examine it, try to convince me and pray for me if I cannot be convinced. Two letters have challenged me to substantiate my conclusion. It is a fair challenge and I hope before long to produce from the Satyarth Prakash passages in its support. My friends will not engage me in a religious discussion with them. I shall content myself with giving them the grounds of my opinion. So far as Swami Shraddhanandji is concerned there is no question of substantiating my opinion. My critics will oblige me by leaving him and me to ourselves. In spite of my opinion I shall not quarrel with the Swamiji. Mine is the criticism of a friend. As for Shuddhi the critics in their blind fury have forgotten the qualification 'as it is understood in Christianity or to a lesser extent in Islam.' This is quite different from saying that there is no proselytism in Hinduism. Hinduism has a way all its own of Shuddhi. But if the Arya Samajists differ from me they may still allow me to retain my opinion. If they will reread the statement, they will discover that I have said that they have a perfect right to carry on their movement if they like. Toleration is not a coinciding of views. There should be toleration of one another's views though they may be as poles asunder. Lastly I have not said that Arya Samajists or Mussalmans do kidnap women. I have said 'I am told'. By repeating what I was told, I have given both the parties an opportunity of repudiating the charge. Was it not better that I should publish what was being said, so that the atmosphere might be cleared?

Let me point out to my Arya Samaj friends that their protests.

The last among the Hindus against whom I have been warned are Jeramdas and Dr. Choithram. I swear by Jeramdas. Truer men I have not had the honour of meeting. His conduct in the jail was the envy of us all.

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betray want of toleration. Public men and public institutions cannot afford to be thin-skinned. They must stand criticism with good grace.

And now for an appeal to them. They have almost all entered their protests. I do not mind them. I assure them that I share their sorrow. It pained me when I wrote my criticism. It pains me now to know that it has hurt them. But I am not their enemy. I claim to be their friend. Time will prove my friendship. They do not want to quarrel with anybody or any faith. That is what almost all have said in their letters. Let them take to heart the tribute I have paid to the Samaj, its founder and to Swami Shraddhanand. I know the purifying work that the Arya Samaj has done. I know that it has laid its finger on many abuses that have soiled Hinduism. But no one can live on his capital. I want them to outlive the latter and extend the spirit of their reform. In spite of their denial I repeat that their Shuddhi propaganda savours of the Christian propaganda. I would like them to rise higher. If they will insist upon reform from within, it will tax all their energy and take up all their time. Let them Hinduise the Hindu if they believe with me that Arya Samaj is a part of Hinduism. If they consider it as distinct from Hinduism, I fear it will be a hard task for them to convert the Hindus. Let them ascertain where they stand. I have criticised because I want them to help the great national and religious movement that is now going on. The Samaj has a great future if it can outgrow what has appeared to me its narrowness. If the Samajists think there is no room for expansion I shall feel sorry. I ask them in that case not to be irritated because I cannot see their liberalism. They should charitably overlook my blindness and patiently endeavour to remove it.

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Gandhiji returned to the subject in *Young India* of June 19, 1924. He wrote under the heading "Arya Samajists Again":

So many Arya-Samajists have written such long dissertations on my (in their opinion) ignorance of Arya-Samaj teachings and their excellence that I was anxious to publish at least one of them so

He was true to a fault. He is not anti-Mussalman. Dr. Choithram though I began to know him earlier I do not know so well. But from what I do know of him, I decline to think of him as anything but a promoter of

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that the reader might have the Arya-Samajist view of my comments. At last I have a letter which it gives me pleasure to publish. It is from Principal Ramdeva of Kangri Gurukul. I have taken the liberty of removing only one passage which in my opinion must have been written in haste and does not do him justice. It does not affect his argument and certainly takes nothing away from his passionate exaltation of the founder of the Samaj. Here is Principal Ramdeva's letter:

I was deeply pained to read your article on Hindu-Muslim Unity in 'Young India'. I have never in my life read an article so disappointing from the pen of one so great. The article has caused deep resentment and heart-burning in the Punjab and the U. P. Instead of easing the situation it has inflamed the Hindu mind and led many thinking people among the Aryas to the conclusion that you are so much biassed in favour of Islam and against the Arya Samaj that you cannot help rendering—though quite unconsciously—a grave injustice to the latter. Your attacks upon the metaphysical beliefs of the Arya Samaj were quite irrelevant and had no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim question. They were not well reasoned out and you are in no mood for a metaphysical discussion. The Arya-Samajist's belief in the plenary inspiration of the Veda has as little connection with Hindu-Muslim tension as your belief in metempsychosis has with the split in the Congress... Besides if belief in verbal inspiration makes for narrowness, Islam is just as narrow as the religion of the Vedas. For this belief formed an essential part of the Muslim creed even in the palmy days of the Mahomedan faith on which you dwell with such fervent enthusiasm. Your implication that Maharshi Dayananda was the first sage to proclaim the doctrine of Vedic infallibility is absolutely without any foundation in fact and only reveals the dangers of dealing with subjects which a man—however great he may be—has not studied. May I respectfully point out that the Upanishads, the Manu Smriti, the six systems of philosophy, the Puranas and the works of Shankara-

Hindu-Muslim unity. I have by no means exhausted the list. All I feel is that if all these Hindus and Samajists have still to be won over to the side of unity, the word unity has no meaning for me, and I should despair of achieving unity in my life-time.

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charya, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Chaitanya and other medieval saints and scholars all preach this doctrine? Again the view that the Vedas contain the germs of all true knowledge including physical science is by no means new, all ancient scientists—like Arya Bhatta, Bhaskaracharya—held it. Besides modern Vedic scholars like Pavgee, Paramashiva Iyer, Dwijdass Datta—none of whom is an Arya-Samajist—have independently arrived at the same conclusion. I wonder if you know that Aravinda Ghosh has publicly declared that Swami Dayanand alone had discovered the right axioms of Vedic exegesis. The testimony of such eminent authorities—who devoted their life-time to the study of the Vedas—cannot be discredited by the mere *ipse dixit* of a Mahatma—however lofty his character and however great and over-flowing his love for his kind—who has not devoted even five consecutive years to the study of the Vedas and the Vedangas in the original. I am afraid you were ill-advised in venturing into the field of theological polemics while writing as the supreme political leader of men of all faiths and creeds. Your characterisation of the 'Satyarth Prakash' is most unfair. It seems you have not read the first ten chapters which deal with prayer, brahmacharya, pedagogics, marriage reform, sanyas, politics, salvation, knowledge and nescience, Vedas and vegetarianism and from the main book—these chapters do not, as a rule, touch upon other religions—and have only skipped over the four supplementary chapters. In fact, you had by means of the mysterious stirrings of your subliminal consciousness, arrived at the queer conclusion that Swami Dayananda was intolerant, long before you had glanced at the 'Satayaratha Prakash' and your hurried reading was vitiated by your pre-conceptions. You were in the position of a judge who pronounced his sentence after hearing the prosecution and then addressed himself to defence evidence in order to be able to write out a judgment in support of the sentence. Men who have read Dayanand's works.

*Bari Saheb*

But the suspicion against these friends is not its worst part. I have been warned against Mussalmans just as much as I have been warned against Hindus.

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carefully—your friend Andrews is one of them—or had the privilege of sitting at his feet—men like A. O. Hume, Revd. Scott, Sir Syed Ahmed, Ranade, Telang, Malabari, Raghunath Rao and Bishan Narayan Dhar—had never any difficulty in declaring that, whatever the merits of individual comments based upon data supplied to him, he was the most tolerant religious reformer of the age and his love for his kind transcended the bounds of race, country, color and even cultural unities. I must finish now. What I have written may sound presumptuous if solely regarded as the comments of a very small man upon the conduct of one justly regarded as the greatest amn of the world. My only defence is that my reverence for you is equalled only by my love and devotion. Love and devotion have between themselves the miraculous power to raise the humble to the level of the mighty. With love and reverence,

Yours affectionately,  
Rama Deva.

I have always said that my politics are subservient to my religion. I have found myself in them, as I could not live my religious life (i. e.) a life of service, without being affected by them. I should discard them today if they hindered it. I cannot therefore subscribe to the doctrine that I may not, being a political leader, deal with matters religious. I have dealt with the Arya Samaj because I felt that it was losing its usefulness and its present activity was doing harm to the country itself. As a friend and a Hindu I claimed to speak pointedly to those who derived their belief from a common source. Had I been dealing with the relative merits of religions, I should certainly have given my views on Islam too.

I confess that I have no first-hand knowledge of the Vedas. But I know enough to be able to judge for myself. Principal Ramdeva is wrong in thinking that I was prejudiced against Mahatma Dayanand's teachings. I do not know the exact terms of the tribute paid to the

Let me take only three names. Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb has been represented to me as an anti-Hindu fanatic. I have been shown some writings of his which I do not understand. I have not even worried him about them. For, he is a simple child of God. I have discovered no guile in him. He often speaks without thinking and often embarrasses his best friends. But he is as quick to apologise as he is ready to say things offensive. He means all he says for the time being. He is as sincere in his anger as he is in his apology. He once flared up at Maulana Mahomed Ali without just cause. I was then his guest. He thought he had said something offensive to me also. Maulana Mahomed Ali and I were just then leaving his place to entrain for Cawnpore. After our departure, he felt he had wronged us. He had certainly wronged Maulana Mahomed Ali, not me. But he sent a deputation to us at Cawnpore asking us to

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great reformer by the great men whom Principal Ramadeva mentions. But probably I should have joined them in their tribute and still retained the opinion I hold. I do not love my wife the less because I know her limitations. My critics have made the mistake of thinking that because I have criticised the founder, I have no affection or regard for him. Let me also assure Principal Ramadeva that I have read all the chapters of Satyarthha Prakash. Will he forget that a man's moral teaching may be of a high order and yet his vision may be narrow? I know that many of my friends, who believe me to be a highly moral man and my moral teaching of a high order, consider that my outlook upon life is narrow and even fanatical. I do not take their criticism as an offence, though I consider myself to have a broad outlook upon life and also entitled to be classed among the most tolerant among mankind. I assure my Arya Samaj friends that I have only judged, if I have judged, as I should be judged by them. Let us therefore cry quits. Let them consider me to be the most intolerant and ignorant among their countrymen and leave me the liberty to retain the opinion I have expressed.



forgive him. He rose in my estimation by this act. I admit however that the Maulana Saheb can become a dangerous friend. But my point is that he is a friend. He does not say one thing and mean another. There are no mental reservations with him. I would trust such a friend with my life because I know that he will never stab me in the dark.\*

### *The Ali Brothers*

A similar warning has been given to me about the Ali brothers. Maulana Shaukat Ali is one of the bravest of men capable of immense sacrifice and equally capable of loving the meanest of God's creatures. He is passionately fond of Islam but he is no hater of other religions. Mahomed Ali is his brother's *alter ego*. I have not seen such implicit faithfulness to an elder brother as in Maulana Mahomed Ali. He has reasoned out for himself that there is no salvation for India without Hindu-Muslim unity. Their pan-Islamism is not anti-Hindu. Who shall quarrel with their intense desire to see Islam united against attack from without and purified from within? One passage in Maulana Mahomed Ali's Cocanada address was pointed out to me as highly objectionable. I drew his attention to it. He immediately acknowledged that it was an error. Friends have told me there is something to object to even in Maulana Shaukat Ali's address to the Khilafat conference. I have

\* In answer to complaints that he was partial to Muslims, Gandhiji wrote *inter alia* in *Young India* of June 12, 1924 :

The critics must not think as some of them do that I am flattering the Mussalmans for gaining a political end. Such a thing is impossible for me, because I know that unity cannot be achieved by flattery. Courteousness must not be mistaken for flattery nor impudence for fearlessness.

the address by me but I have not had time to study it. I know that if there is anything offensive in it, he is the man the readiest to make amends. The brothers are not faultless. Being full of faults myself, I have not hesitated to seek and cherish their friendship. If they have some faults, they have many virtues. And I love them in spite of their faults. Just as I cannot forsake the Hindu friends I have mentioned above and effectively work among Hindus for Hindu-Muslim unity, neither can I work to that end among the Mussalmans without the Mussalman friends, such as I have mentioned. If so many of us were perfect beings, there would be no quarrels. Imperfect as we are, we have to discover points of contact and with faith in God work away for the common end.

In order to purify the atmosphere of distrust of even the best of us, I had to deal with some of the principal characters. I may not have convinced the reader of the correctness of my estimate. Any way it was necessary that he knew mine even if his was different from it.

*Illustration from Sind*

This intense distrust makes it almost impossible to know the truth. I have received from Dr. Choithram the alleged facts of an attempted forcible conversion of a Hindu in Sindh. The man is said to have been done to death by his Mussalman companions because he will not accept Islam. The facts are ghastly if they are true. I straightway wired to Sheth Haji Abdulla Harun inquiring about the matter. He very kindly and promptly wired to say that it was reported to be a case of suicide but that he was making further inquiries. I hope that we shall succeed in knowing the truth about it. I simply

point out the difficulty of work in the midst of suspicion. There is one other Sind incident which I hesitate to report till I have fuller and more authentic particulars. I simply beseech those who hear about any such incidents, whether against Hindus or Mussalmans, to keep themselves cool and pass on simply facts which can be sustained. I promise on my part to inquire into the most trifling of cases and do whatever is possible for a single individual to do. Before long I hope we shall have an army of workers whose one business will be to investigate all such complaints and do whatever is necessary to see that justice is satisfied and cases for future trouble are avoided.

*From Bengal*

The tales that are reported from Bengal of outrages upon Hindu women are the most disquieting if they are even half true. It is difficult to understand the causes of the eruption of such crimes at the present moment. It is equally difficult to speak with restraint of the cowardice of Hindu protectors of these outraged sisters. Nor is it easy to characterise the lust of those who become so mad with it as to take liberties with innocent women. It is up to the local Mussalmans and the leading Mussalmans in general of Bengal to find out the miscreants, not necessarily with a view to getting them punished, but with a view to preventing a recurrence of such crimes. It is easy enough to dig out a few criminals from their hiding places and hand them over to the police, but it does not protect society against the repetition of them. It is necessary to remove the causes by undertaking a thorough process of reform. There must arise in Islam as well as in Hinduism men who being

comparatively pure in character would work among such men. Much the same may be said of the Kabuli terror. This has no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim tension. But we have to deal with such cases too if we are not to be helplessly relying purely upon the police.

### *Shuddhi and Tabligh*

That however which is keeping up the tension is the manner in which the Shuddhi or conversion movement is being conducted. In my opinion there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism as it is understood in Christianity or to a lesser extent in Islam. The Arya Samaj has I think copied the Christians in planning its propaganda. The modern method does not appeal to me. It has done more harm than good. Though regarded as a matter of the heart purely and one between the maker and oneself, it has degenerated into an appeal to the selfish instinct. The Arya Samaj preacher is never so happy as when he is reviling other religions. My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real Shuddhi movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan, character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God (for that must be the implication of Shuddhi or Tabligh) when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions? "Physician heal thyself" is more true in matters religious than mundane. But these are my views. If the

Arya-Samajists think that they have a call from their conscience, they have a perfect right to conduct the movement. Such a burning call recognises no time limit, no checks of experience. If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or a Mussalman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep. Why should we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine. If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked.\* But no propaganda can be allowed

\* Gandhiji has no respect for them who in any degree seek to apply compulsion in religion. The following appeared in *Young India* of June 12, 1924:

*The Bhopal Apostacy Circular.* Friends sent me a copy of the apostacy law of the Bhopal state now over a month ago. I purposely refrained from dealing with it, because I was not then ready to publish my views on Hindu-Muslim tension and because I wanted to make further inquiries into the matter. Meanwhile I have seen Dr. Ansari's note upon it.

Here is a translation of the circular:

"Copy of *Jaridah*, dated, 7th July 1920.

Resolution No. 17, dated 5th July 1920.

Her Highness the Ruler of Bhopal has been pleased to order that, in pursuance of section 300 of the Shahjebani Penal Code, Rule No. 1, 1912, that is in the Compiled Penal Code of Bhopal, section 393, after section 393 A. the following be added, which after the date of publication will be in force and enforced:—

<i>Apostacy after Embracing Islam</i>	Section 393 A. Any person renouncing his faith after once embracing Islam, shall be liable to be sentenced to punishment of either description extending to three years' imprisonment or to fine, or both.
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This order is published for general information and observance."

I do not know whether the dates are accurately given. But assuming the correctness, the law is of a fairly recent date. But whether it is recent or ancient does not much matter. The question is whether it is good law or whether it is bad law according to pure

which reviles other religions. For that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it. Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear that cloak down, it dies for want of respectability. I am told that both Arya-Samajists and Mussalmans virtually kidnap women and try to convert them. I have before me volumes of Aga-Khani literature which I have not yet had the time to study carefully, but I am assured that it is a distortion of Hinduism; I have seen enough of it to know that it describes H. H. the Aga Khan as a Hindu *avatar*.<sup>\*</sup> It would be interesting to learn what the Aga Khan himself thinks of all this

<sup>\*</sup> This reference to the Aga Khan Khojas offended them and five members of the community visited Mahatmaji whom he assured that if, as a result of his personal study of their literature, he found the charges levelled against them by his informants were untrue, he would apologise, but that—he wrote in *Young India* of June 12, 1924—“they must not take it ill, if I confirm the informants’ opinion.” He continued :

I have also told them that I cannot subscribe to the belief that H. H. the Aga Khan is an *avatar* in the Hindu sense. I have also told them that the use made by them of the mystic syllable ‘Om’ and the form given to it by them is in my opinion taking liberty with things of the Hindu faith.

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Islam. The ideal before us is that the two, and for that matter, all the religions should live in peace and that there may be free interchange among them if the people so desire, in other words there should be no compulsion in religion. Some of us Hindus and Mussalmans are endeavouring to bring up the practice to the level of that ideal. If, therefore, Islam does not make it penal for one who has embraced it to go back to one’s own faith, the law in question must be considered to be against the spirit of Islam and therefore it should be abrogated at the earliest moment. I hope that, if the position is as I have stated, the Mussalman leaders will request her Highness the Begum Saheba of Bhopal to repeal the law.

literature. I have many Khoja friends. I commend this literature to their attention. A gentleman told me that some agents of the Aga-Khani movement lend money to poor illiterate Hindus and then tell them that the debt would be wiped out if the debtor would accept Islam. I would regard this as conversion by unlawful inducements. But the worst form is that preached by a gentleman of Delhi. I have read his pamphlet from cover to cover. It gives detailed instructions to preachers how to carry on propaganda. It starts with a lofty proposition that Islam is merely preaching of the unity of God. This grand truth is to be preached, according to the writer, by every Mussalman irrespective of character. A secret department of spies is advocated whose one business is to be to pry into the privacy of non-Muslim households. Prostitutes, professional singers, mendicants, Government servants, lawyers, doctors, artisans are pressed into the service. If this kind of propaganda becomes popular, no Hindu household would be safe from the secret attention of disguised misinterpreters (I cannot call them missionaries) of the great message of the Prophet of Islam. I am told by respectable Hindus that this pamphlet is widely read in the Nizam's dominions and that the methods advocated in it are extensively practised in the Nizam's dominions.

As a Hindu I feel sorry that methods of such doubtful morality should have been seriously advocated by a gentleman who is a well-known Urdu author and has a

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'But' they say, 'what are we to do if we honestly hold such belief?' I have told them that they should then hold fast to their belief and give me the liberty to say and write what I believe to be right. They further repudiated with great emphasis the charge that they converted by giving worldly temptations.

large circle of readers. My Mussalman friends tell me that no respectable Mussalman approves of the methods advocated. The point however is not what the respectable Mussalmans think. The point is whether a considerable number of Mussalman masses accept and follow them. A portion of the Punjab press is simply scurrilous. It is at times even filthy. I have gone through the torture of reading many extracts. These sheets are conducted by Arya Samajists or Hindu and Mussalman writers. Each vies with the other in using abusive language and reviling the religion of the opponent. These papers have, I understand, a fairly large circulation. They find place even in respectable reading rooms.

I have heard it said that the Government emissaries are at the back of this campaign of calumny. I hesitate to believe it. But even assuming the truth of it, the public of the Punjab should be able to cope with the growing disgrace.

I think I have now examined all the causes, both original and continuing, of the tension between the two communities. It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of friction.

#### *Cow-Slaughter*

The first is cow slaughter. Though I regard cow protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to classes as well as masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Mussalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Mussalman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow



have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have on the contrary stiffened the backs of the Mussalmans and resulted in more slaughter. I am satisfied that during 1921 more cows were saved through the voluntary and generous effort of the Mussalmans than through the Hindu effort during all the previous twenty years (say). Cow protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world perhaps are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle are a disgrace to us. The cows find there necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Mussalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of the cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture land, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning *pinjrapoles* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow slaughter at the hands of Mussalmans, and they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Mussalman.

### *Music*

The question of music before mosques and now even *arati* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention. This is a sore point with the Mussalmans as cow slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as

Hindus cannot compel Mussalmans to refrain from killing cows, so can Mussalmans not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They must trust to the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu I would certainly advise Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Mussalman neighbour, and wherever they can, accomodate him. I have heard that in some places, Hindus purposely and with the deliberate intention of irritating Mussalmans, perform *arati* just when the Mussalman prayers commence. This is an insensate and unfriendly act. Friendship presupposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend. It never requires consideration. But Mussalmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force. To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person, who never will yield to threat, would always minimise and, if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation.

### *Pact*

In view of what I have said above, it is clear that we have not even arrived at the stage when a pact is even a possibility. There can be, it is clear to me, no question of bargain about cow-slaughter and music. On either side it must be a voluntary effort and therefore can never be the basis of a pact.

For political matters a pact or an undertaking is certainly necessary. But in my opinion the restoration of friendly feeling is a condition precedent to any effectual pact. Are both parties sincerely willing to accept the proposition that no disputes, religious or otherwise, between the communities

should ever be decided by an appeal to force, i. e., violence? I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual vows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

So far as the political matters are concerned, as a non-co-operator, I am quite uninterested in them; but for the future understanding I hold that it is up to the Hindus as the major party not to bargain but leave the pen in the hands of, say, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and abide by his decision. I would similarly deal with the Sikhs, the Christians and the Parsis and be satisfied with the residue. It is in my opinion, the only just, equitable, honourable and dignified solution. Hindus if they want unity among different races must have the courage to trust the minorities. Any other adjustment must have a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the proper use of Satyagraha, we should know that it can be and should be used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Mussalman or of any other race or denomination, whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good whether he be a Hindu or Mussalman. We want to do away with the communal spirit. The majority must therefore make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their *bona fides*. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

So far as employment in the Government depart-

ments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to good government, if we introduce there the communal spirit. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we want five engineers we must not take one from each community but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Mussalmans or all Parsis. The lowest posts must, if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities. But distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the government of the country, can only do so if they pass the required test.

### *Trust Begets Trust*

For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Mussalman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means Swaraj. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart unity between Hindus and Mussalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both and because I believe in human nature. Mussalmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a "bad lot." I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. The Mussalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting,

the moment their suspicion is disarmed. Hindus living as they do in glass houses have no right to throw stones at their Mussalman neighbours. See what we have done, are still doing, to the suppressed classes! If 'Kaffir' is a term of opprobrium, how much more so is 'Chandal'? In the history of the world religions, there is perhaps nothing like our treatment of the suppressed classes. The pity of it is that the treatment still continues. What a fight in Vaikom for a most elementary human right! God does not punish directly. His ways are inscrutable. Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world. When the West was sunk in darkness a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it reverently and they will love it even as I do. If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so. If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its past liberal traditions. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must shed timidity or cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust, and all will be well.

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*21st August, 1924.*

## BOLSHEVISM OR DISCIPLINE?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Two American friends have written to me a passionately-worded letter saying that in the name of religion I am probably introducing in India Bolshevism which knows no God or morality and is frankly atheistic. They say that the alliance between Mussalmans and myself is an unholy alliance and a menace to the world, for, they argue, Mussalmans are to-day aiming at supremacy in the East with the help of Bolshevist Russia. I have heard this charge hurled against me before now, but I have hitherto taken no notice of it. But it seems to me it is time for me to consider it when it is brought by responsible foreign friends in all good faith. In the first place I must confess that I do not know the meaning of Bolshevism. I know that there are two opposite parties, one painting it in the blackest colours, the other hailing it as deliverance for the down-trodden masses all the world over. I do not know what to believe. All I can say is that my movement is not atheistic. It is not a denial of God. It has been undertaken in His name and is being continued with constant prayer. It is undoubtedly a mass movement but it seeks to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature. It is a process of discipline and hence it is that it has filled even some of the best of my co-workers with despair.

I am proud of the alliance between the Mussalmans and myself. Islam is not a denial of God. It is a passionate avowal of one supreme deity. Not even its worst detractors have accused Islam of atheism. If

therefore Bolshevism is atheism, there can be no common ground between it and Islam. They must in that case come to death-grip. It will be an embrace of opponents, not of friends. I have retained the American letter phraseology. But let me inform my American readers and others that I am under no delusion. My pretension is very humble. The alliance there is between the Ali Brothers and myself, i. e., between a few valued Mussalman friends and myself. I would love to call it an alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus—not myself. But that seems to have been a day-dream. In truth therefore one may say, there is an alliance between some Mussalmans including the Ali brothers, and some Hindus including myself. How far it carries us, the future will show. There is no vagueness about the alliance. It is the most natural thing in the world. It is tragic that it excites wonder and even apprehension. What can be more natural than that Hindus and Mussalmans born and bred in India having the same adversities, the same hopes, should be permanent friends, brothers born of the same mother-India? The surprise is that we should fight, not that we should unite. And why should the combination be a menace to the world? The greatest menace to the world to-day is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which through the enslavement of India is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races of the world. That imperialism is a negation of God. It does ungodly acts in the name of God. It covers its inhumanities, Dyerisms and O'Dwyerisms under cover of humanity, justice and righteousness. And the pity of it is that the majority of Englishmen do not know that their name is being exploited. The great pity of it is that sober, God-

fearing Englishmen are beguiled into the belief that all is well when all is ill with India, that all is well with the African races when they are being exploited and degraded in their name. If the defeat of Germany and the central powers ended the German peril, the victory of the Allies has brought into being a peril no less deadly for the peace of the world. I wish therefore that the so-called alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus will become a permanent reality based on a frank recognition of enlightened self-interest. It will then transmute the iron of sordid imperialism into the gold of humanitarianism. The Hindu-Muslim alliance is intended to be a blessing to India and to the world for it is conceived in a spirit of peace and good-will to all. It has adopted non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for achieving Swaraj in India. Its symbol—the charkha, the spinning wheel—is a symbol of simplicity, self-reliance, self-control, voluntary co-operation among millions. If such an alliance proves a menace to the world, then there is no God or God is asleep.

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*28th August, 1924*

GULBARGA GONE MAD

BY M. K. GANDHI

I hinted last week\* that there was evidently an organisation at the back of the mania for desecrating Hindu temples. Gulbarga is the latest instance in point.

\* In *Young India* of August 21, 1924, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the desecration of two temples one at Moradabad and one at Amethi in Lucknow and stated, "There is no doubt that these cases have an organisation at their back"—an organisation which "cannot enhance the dignity of Islam" and "cannot popularise it."



Whatever the Hindu provocation, if there was any, the Mussalman outburst has an ominous look about it. The desecration of temples cannot be justified in any circumstance whatsoever. Maulana Shaukat Ali when he heard of Shambhar and Amethi desecrations exclaimed in a fit of temper that the Mussalmans should not be surprised if the Hindus retaliate and some day find that their mosques have been desecrated. The Hindus may feel flattered or pleased over the Maulana's indignant exclamation. But I do not and I advise the Hindus not to be. Let them understand that I feel, perhaps more keenly than most of them, every fanatic outburst on the part of Mussalmans. I am fully aware of my responsibility in the matter. I know that many Hindus feel that I am responsible for many of these outbursts. For, they argue, I contributed the largest share to the awakening of the Mussalman masses. I appreciate the charge. Though I do not repent of my contribution, I feel the force of the objection. Therefore, if for no other reason, for this at least of greater responsibility, I must feel, more keenly than most Hindus can, these desecrations. I am both an idolater and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true senses of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Mussalmans presupposes their perfect tolerance for my idols and my temples. I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is

more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the Deity with a little bit of a stone or a golden image.

True Hindu-Muslim unity requires Mussalmans to tolerate, not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so is it expected of Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may appear to their, the Hindus', sense of religion. The Hindus must therefore reject the idea of retaliation. The law of retaliation we have been trying since the day of Adam and we know from experience that it has hopelessly failed. We are groaning under its poisonous effect. Above all the Hindus may not break mosques against temples. That way lies slavery and worse. Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits, I would not touch a single mosque and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics. I would love to hear of priests dying at their posts in defence of their temples and their idols. Let them learn to suffer and to die in the defence of their temples even as God allows Himself to be insulted and broken up in the insult and damage done to the idols in which being omnipresent He undoubtedly resides. Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples by seeking to destroy mosques and thus proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples.

To the unknown who are undoubtedly behind these desecrations I submit: "Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. I have not found a single Mussalman defending these outbursts not even under

provocation. There seems to me to have been little if any provocation offered by the Hindus. But let us assume that it was otherwise, that Hindus played music near mosques to exasperate Mussalmans, that they even removed a stone from a minaret. Yet I venture to say that Mussalmans ought not to have desecrated Hindu temples. Even retaliation has its limits. Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to contemplate with some degree of equanimity injury to life but not to temples. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to every man even if it stand low in the scales of philosophic comparison. But presumption is against such Hindu provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu-Muslim tension. I have failed to receive any proof in support of them. You will not enhance the reputation of Islam by the acts reported about Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga. If you will permit me to say so, I feel about the honour of Islam as much as I feel about my own religion. This I do because I desire to live in perfect, open and hearty friendship with Mussalmans. I cannot help saying that these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart."

To the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi, I say: "Yours is a golden opportunity, if you desire amity between the two communities. In the light of what seems to have happened at Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga, it is doubly your duty to solve the question. You have had the rare good fortune of having amongst you two Mussalmans Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and

Dr. Ansari who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of both the communities. You have therefore noble traditions behind you. You can turn your quarrels to good account by closing the ranks and establishing a heart friendship that will not break under any strain whatsoever. I have placed my services at your disposal. If you will have me to act as a mediator between you, I am prepared to bury myself in Delhi and in collaboration with any others whom you may appoint endeavour to find out the true facts. 'An authentic story' of the events of July last and the circumstances that led to them is a necessary preliminary to a lasting solution. I ask you to come to a decision quickly. The Hindu-Muslim question is the question on a proper solution of which hangs the destiny of India in the immediate future. Delhi can solve the question, for the others are likely to follow what Delhi might do."

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*15th September, 1924.*

## THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

As I am reaching Delhi, I read the following letter which I give almost word for word, save for two or three slight grammatical corrections:—

"The Mussalmans of Nagpur have run amuck. Though a Hindu, I have hitherto studiously refrained from taking any part in the Hindu agitation at Nagpur. I am a believer both in non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity. Believe me, there is no sectarian spirit in me. But the doings of the Mussalmans in Nagpur, as in many other places, are putting my faith to a very severe test indeed. The pity of it is that, not a single responsible Mussalman of Nagpur has publicly condemned these acts. Had it not been for the brave

Doctor Moonje and the gallant Udaram followed by the 'Koshthis' there is no knowing what atrocities the Mussalmans would have committed. I know there is no bargaining in love. I also agree that in love it is all giving. But I cannot forget that the sacrifice and sufferings undergone for the sake of love are voluntary and not forced. But the Hindu yields not out of his strength, not of his own free will, but out of his weakness and in spite of himself. To my mind the Hindus are only trying to shake off the slavery of the British to become serfs of the Mussalmans. Your pathetic article on 'Gulbarga Gone Mad' is an index of the depth of your own feelings in this matter.

But you have yourself several times declared that you would prefer violence to cowardice. You also wrote in the *Young India*, some weeks ago, that the average Mussalman was a bully, and that the average Hindu was a coward. Alas! this is only too true! How else could the Mussalmans of Nagpur, who are in a minority, rise so often in the teeth of the overwhelming number of the Hindus? The fact of the case is that the docile Hindu commands neither respect nor fear. Whether or not Darwin was right is not my part to determine. But one thing is clear. The world has no place for the weak. They must become strong or cease to be. If the Hindus want to live, they must organize, they must get strong, they must agitate, and they must learn the divine art of dying for the honour of their women and their gods.

But they are hopeless cowards. For them non-violence has no meaning. It only serves as a mask to cover their abject cowardice. To preach to them non-violence sounds very much like preaching a sermon on moderation in diet to the famine-stricken before providing them with the means of satisfying their hunger or is like feeding a sick and infirm man with food that even strong men find it difficult to digest. Far from doing him the least good, it does him incalculable harm.

If you follow this line of thought, will you not feel constrained to concede that for a real and lasting Hindu-Muslim unity the Hindus must develop the spirit of manliness? Must they not learn to vindicate the honour of their women and their temples? The weak are the greatest enemies of society. They corrupt both themselves and the strong, the latter by tempting them to bully. Weakness curseth both him that is weak and him that bullies him. The Hindus may not

retaliate in the sense of taking 'a tooth for a tooth,' and 'an eye for an eye.' They may not avenge themselves by violating the sanctity of Mussalman womanhood or by defiling or demolishing mosques. But since non-violence is beyond them, should you not advise them to learn to teach the wrong-doers a salutary lesson? Must they not develop the ability to defend themselves violently, before they could be expected to appreciate non-violence? Do not the good of the Hindus, real Hindu-Muslim friendship, and, for that matter, Swaraj, lie that way?

These thoughts have been agitating my mind now for a pretty long time. I tried to reason with myself, but I could not find a satisfactory answer to the questions named above. Hence I turn to you for guidance. I hope you will excuse me for encroaching upon your time with such a long letter. I shall be earnestly awaiting your reply to this in the columns of the *Young India* at your earliest convenience.

I would like to have my identity, though not my letter, kept private."

The earnestness of the writer is written in every part of the letter. The reasoning is sound so far as it goes. My difficulty, however, arises when we come to working out in practice the writer's propositions and their corollaries. The reader will find an outline of my scheme of work in the translation given elsewhere,\* and made for me by Mahadeo Desai, of an article I wrote in *Navajivan* last week to meet a difficulty that has arisen in Gujarat and in answer to questions put both by Hindu and Mussalman friends.

Mine is at the present moment a most pitiable position. Thousands, it may be said in truth, look to me for guidance at this time of trial for the nation. I have taken a leading part in the Khilafat agitation. I have unhesitatingly and fearlessly propounded the doctrine of giving without the stipulation of receiving anything

\*. See page 73.

in return. There is no flaw in my reasoning. But the correspondent's question is, 'Is my reasoning relevant to the situation? Have Hindus anything to give? One can give without taking, only out of the fulness of possession.'

Let us see.

It is common cause between the correspondent and myself that the average Hindu is a coward. How is he to be turned into a brave man? Is he to become brave by muscular development or by developing the bravery of the soul? My correspondent says, 'The world has no place for the weak.' He means, I imagine, 'physically weak'! If so, the proposition is unsound. There are many animals physically stronger than man, and yet man lives. Many muscular races have died out and some of them are even now in the process of dying out. The proposition should therefore be, so far as man is concerned, 'The world has no place for the weak in spirit'.

The die is cast for me. The common factor of all religions is non-violence. Some inculcate more of it than others, all agree that you can never have too much of it. We must be sure, however, that it is non-violence and not a cloak for cowardice.

Now in order to arrive at a solution we must not think of the man in the street. We must think of ourselves who are behind the man in the street and pulling the strings. Let us take care that *we* do nothing out of fear. I hate duelling, but it has a romantic side to it. I am engaged in bringing that side of it to the fore. I would love to engage in a duel with the Big Brother.\* When we are both satisfied that there is no chance of

\* Moulana Shaukat Ali.

unity without bloodshed, and that even we two cannot agree to live in peace, I must then invite the Big Brother to a duel with me. I know that he can twist me round his thick fingers and dash me to pieces. That day Hinduism will be free. Or, if he lets me kill him in spite of the strength of a giant, Islam in India will be free. He will have atoned for all the bullying by the average Mussalman. What I detest is the match between *goondas* of both the parties. Any peace based upon such a trial of strength will turn to bitterness in the end. The way to get rid of the Hindu cowardice is for the educated portion to fight the *goondas*. We may use sticks and other clean weapons. My *ahimsa* will allow the use of them. We shall be killed in the fight. But that will chasten both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. That would remove the Hindu cowardice in a moment. As things are going, each party will be the slaves of their own *goondas*. That means dominance of the military power. England fought for the predominance of the civil power and won and lived. Lord Curzon did much harm to us. But he was certainly brave and right when he stood out for the predominance of civil authority. When Rome passed into the hands of the soldiery, it fell. My whole soul rises against the very idea of the custody of my religion passing into the hands of *goondas*. Confining myself, therefore, for the present to the Hindus, I must respectfully but earnestly warn the thinking Hindus against relying upon the assistance of *goondas* for the protection of their temples, themselves and their wives and children. With the weak bodies they have, they must be determined to stand at their post and to die fighting or without fighting. It would have been a glorious death for Jamnalaji



and his colleagues, if they had died in the act of securing peace. It will be a glorious death for Dr. Moonje or me, when we defend temples single-handed. That were bravery of the spirit indeed.

But there are many less heroic things to do. We must find out the true facts about Nagpur. I am in correspondence with Dr. Moonje about it. I am wooing the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi to let me know the root causes of the trouble there. I have offered to arbitrate singly or in company. They have not yet repelled my advances. There is no authentic story of the unfortunate trouble. I must refuse to lose my head. I am not satisfied that the Mussalmans alone are to blame for everything in every place. I do not know what was the first cause. I do know that an unscrupulous press on either side is today poisoning the minds of the simple Hindus and the simple Mussalmans. I do know also that more poison is being spread in private conversations, and incidents are exaggerated beyond all recognition. I am going to leave no stone unturned to reach the bottom of this sea of darkness, doubt and despair. A true statement of facts to date is the preliminary indispensable to a correct solution of the tension that threatens to paralyse all healthy public activity. My intense desire to reach a solution of the trouble is not the least among the causes that have impelled me to a complete surrender to the Swarajists\* and all concerned.

\* See section relating to Congress.

## HINDU MUSLIM UNITY

The following is the important article by Gandhi on the Hindu-Muslim tension in the last issue of *Navajivan* translated for the benefit of the readers of *Young India* by Mahadeo Desai referred to above.

I had occasion whilst addressing a public meeting at Surat to refer to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in detail, as some friends there wanted to know my views about Sangathan. After the meeting I had a letter from a Mussalman friend offering suggestions for the solution of the question. I now see that even Gujarat is not quite free from the dangers of communal disturbances. The Visnagar affair can hardly be said to be yet settled. There is some trouble in Mandal. There was fear of a little disturbance in Ahmedabad. Some trouble is apprehended in Umreth. Other parts (e. g., Bhagalpur in Bihar) are also in the same plight.

The question of Hindu Muslim unity is getting more and more serious every day. One thing should be made clear at the outset. In the case of many of these disturbances, we hear of Government agents being at the back of them. The allegation, if true, would be painful to me, not surprising. It should not be surprising if the Government fomented the troubles, it being their policy to divide us. It would be painful because of the necessary implication that neither of the communities realises wherein lies its interest. Only those can be set by the ears by a third party, who are in the habit of quarrelling. Government has never been heard of having fomented a quarrel, say, between the Brahmans and Banias, nor amongst the Sunni Mussalmans. The suspicion or fear of their having set the Hindus and Mussalmans by the ears is always entertained, because both have quarrelled so often. It is this habit of quarreling that needs to be abandoned if we want to have Swaraj and retain it.

Quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found where there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection, if they go on hugging fear. Fear of man argues want of faith in God. Only he trusts to his physical strength who has no faith or very little faith in God's omnipresence. The Hindu

must cultivate either of these two—faith in God or faith in one's physical might. If he does neither, it will spell the ruin of the community.

The first viz. reliance on God and shaking off the fear of man is the way of non-violence and the best way. The second viz. reliance on one's physical might is the way of violence. Both have a place in the world. It is open to us to choose either. One man cannot try both at the same time. If all the Hindus and Mussalmans both elect the way of violence, we had better cease to talk of winning Swaraj in the immediate future. Armed peace means not a little fighting that will end with the breaking of a few heads or of a dozen temples. It must mean prolonged fighting and rivers of blood. I am against Sangathan, and I am not. If Sangathan means opening *akadas* and organising the Hindu hooligans through them, I would regard it as a pitiable condition. You cannot defend yourself and your religion with the help of hooligans. It is substituting one peril for another, and even adding another. I would have nothing to say against *akadas* if they were used by the Brahmans, Banias and others for the development of their physique. *Akhadas* as *akhadas* are unexceptionable. But I have no doubt that they are no good for giving a training to fight the Mussalmans. It will take years to acquire the physical strength to fight.

The *akhada* is therefore not the way. We will have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of Mussalmans. We shall have to cast off all the evil in us. If they attack us, we shall have to learn not to return blow for blow, but bravely to face death—not to die a craven death leaving wife and children behind, but to receive their blows and meet death cheerfully.

I would tender the same advice to the Mussalmans. But it is unnecessary, as the average Mussalman has been assumed to be a bully. The general impression is that the Mussalmans can fight and fight well. I do not, therefore, need to tell them how they should defend themselves from the attacks of the Hindus; on the contrary I have to appeal to them to forbear. I have to appeal to them to get the *goonda* element under control and to behave peaceably. The Mussalmans may regard the Hindus as a menace in other matters. They do regard them as an economic menace. They do dread the Hindus' interference with their religious rites on the Bakr-id day. But they are in no fear of being beaten by the Hindus. I will therefore tell

them only this: 'You cannot protect Islam with the *lathi* or the sword. The age of the *lathi* is gone. A religion will be tested by the purity of its adherents. If you leave it to the *goondas* to defend your youth, you will do serious harm to Islam. Islam will, in that case no longer remain the faith of the fakirs and worshippers of Allah.'

I have up to now confined myself to giving general advice. Maulana Hasrat Mohani told me that the Mussalmans ought to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, and Hindus, should cease to regard the Mussalmans as untouchables, as he said they are regarded in North India. I told him: 'I will not bargain with you in this matter. If the Mussalmans think it their duty to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, they may do so, irrespective of how the Hindus behave towards them. I think it a sin for a Hindu to look upon a Mussalman as an untouchable, and the Hindu ought not to do so, irrespective of a Mussalman killing or sparing the cow. The Mussalman ought to be no more "untouchable" to a Hindu than a Hindu of any of the four castes is to one of the other. I regard these things as axiomatic. If Hinduism teaches hatred of Islam or of non-Hindus, it is doomed to destruction. Each community should then put its house in order without bargaining with the other. To nurse enmity against the Mussalman, for the sake of saving the cow, is a sure way to kill the cow and doubly sinful. Hinduism will not be destroyed by a non-Hindu killing a cow. The Hindus' religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu. The Hindus want Swaraj in India, and not a Hindu Raj. Even if there was a Hindu Raj, and toleration one of its features, there would be place in it for Mussalmans as well as Christians; it would redound to the credit of Hinduism, if stopping of cow-slaughter was brought about not by force, but as a deliberate voluntary act of self-denial on the part of Mussalmans and others. I would therefore deem it unpatriotic even to nurse a dream of Hindu Raj.'

Then there is the trouble about music. It is fast growing every day. A letter I had in Surat says that, as it is not obligatory on a Hindu to play music, he should stop it before mosques to spare the feelings of the Mussalmans. I wish the question was as simple as the correspondent thinks. But it is the opposite of simple. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony can be performed without the accompaniment of music. Some ceremonies require the accompani-

ment of continuous music. No doubt, even here due regard ought to be had for the feelings of the Mussalmans. The music may in such cases be less noisy. But all this can be and ought to be done on the basis of 'give and take.' Having talked with a number of Mussalmans in the matter, I know that Islam does not make it obligatory for a Mussalman to prevent a non-Mussalman from playing music near mosques. Nor is such a thing on the part of a non-Mussalman calculated to injure Islam. Music should never, therefore, be a bone of contention.

In many places, however, the Mussalmans have forcibly sought to stop Hindus from playing music. This is clearly intolerable. What is readily yielded to courtesy is never yielded to force. Submission to a courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion. If the Hindus stop music for fear of a beating from the Mussalmans, they cease to be Hindus. The general rule in this respect may be said to be this, that where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.

Where a court of law has prohibited music, the Hindus should not take the law in their own hands. And the Mussalmans should not insist on stopping music by force.

Where the Mussalmans refuse to yield, or where the Hindus apprehend violence, and where there is no prohibition by a court of law, the Hindus must take out their processions with music accompanying, and put up with all the beating inflicted on them. All those who join such processions or who form the musical band must thus sacrifice themselves. They will thereby defend their Faith and their self-respect.

Where the Hindus are unequal to this soul-force, it is open to them to resort to force in self-defence. Where death without resistance is the only way, neither party should think of resorting to law courts or help from Government. Even if one of the parties resort to such aid, the other should refrain. If resort to law courts cannot be avoided, there ought to be at least no resort to false evidence.

It is the rule of honourable combat that, after having heartily given and taken blows, both the parties quite down, and seek no

reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge behind.

A quarrel should in no case be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged and the infirm, children and all non-combatants ought to be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsman-like if these rules are observed.

I hope that the Hindus and Mussalmans in Gujarat will keep their heads cool and keep the peace. I hope also that the fear of a possible trouble in Imreth is unjustified. Let both the communities there hold mutual consultations and settle their differences amicably.

Running away for fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion, it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it.

It will take some time before the average Hindu ceases to be a coward and the average Mussalman ceases to be a bully. In the meantime, the thinking section of both the communities should try their best, on all occasions of trouble, to refer matters to arbitration. Their position is delicate, but they should expend all their energy in keeping the peace.

*25th September, 1924.*

## ALL ABOUT THE FAST

BY M. K. GANDHI

I wish to assure the reader that the fast\* has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact my life has been at stake\* ever since the birth of

Announcing a fast for 21 days Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement from Delhi on September 18:

The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My hopelessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am therefore imposing on myself a fast of 21 days.

non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it.

commencing from today and ending on Wednesday, October 6. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer.

As penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts.

Commenting on the above statement Mahatmaji wrote in *Young India* of September 25, 1924;

I observe that in my note on fasting I have been made to say,—  
 “My hopelessness is still more unbearable.” My statement mentions ‘helplessness’, not hopelessness. A man with a grain of faith in God never loses hope, because he ever believes in the ultimate triumph of Truth. A man of God never strives after untruth and therefore he can never lose hope. On the contrary, his hope shines the brightest ‘amidst encircling gloom.’ But my helplessness is a very patent fact before me. I may not ignore it. I must ever confess it. There is a beautiful Tamil proverb which says ‘God is the sole help of the helpless.’ The truth of this never came upon me with so much force as it has come today. Handling large masses of men, dealing with them, speaking and acting for them is no joke for a man whose capacity God has so circumscribed. One has, therefore, to be ever on the watch. And the reader may rest assured that I took the final step after I had realised to the full my utter helplessness. And I cried out to God even like Draupadi when she seemed to be abandoned by her five brave protectors. And her cry did not ascend to the Almighty in vain. That cry must not be from the lip. It has to be from the deepest recesses of one’s heart. And, therefore, such a cry is only possible when one is in anguish. Mine has expressed itself in a fast which is by no means adequate for the issues involved. My heart continually says:

“Rock of Ages cleft for me.

Let me hide myself in Thee.”

No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether therefore I will or not I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural vicious and sinful. But non-violent non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

The fact that Hindus and Mussalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases.



I did penance then. It had its effect *protanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. I little knew then that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fact is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Sambhar and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Sambhar prepared by Hindu and Mussalman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussalman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy, I must do penance. In the Satyagrahashram at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the

prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed.

It is a warning to the Hindus and Mussalmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching—some with glee and some with sorrow—the dog fight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion—call it by what name you like—is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Mussalmans is not fasting but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussalman to harbour no ill for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussalman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussalman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Sahib who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday, nor Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it, he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it

their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussalman roof? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussalman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussalman house.

And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by being so much with Mussalman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing, if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussalman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussalmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussalmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so. My fast is among other things meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love. —22-9-24.

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### MORE ABOUT THE FAST

The following paragraphs notes and statements, which appeared in *Young India* give further details about the fast:

#### NOTICE TO READERS.

*Young India* and *Navajivan* are my delight. I love to write weekly to the public through this medium. But I am sorry to say that for two or three weeks I must suspend the editorial responsibility. My medical tyrants forbid it. Charlie Andrews insists on editing *Young India* himself during the period of purification and convalescence. I gladly accept the offer. We are as blood-brothers. And the reader will be glad to have the same message rendered in a chaster and purer style. English is after all a foreign tongue for me. Charlie Andrews is master of it. It can, therefore, only give me pleasure to

surrender editorial control of *Young India* to him. Mahadev Desai will be responsible for the editorship of *Navajivan*. Among the Gujaratis, I have no more faithful interpreter of my message than he. This does not mean that I shall write nothing for the pages of *Young India* or *Navajivan*. If my strength keeps up—and it is highly likely—to the end and if the doctors allow, I hope to contribute a few paragraphs to each.—M. K. G. in *Young India* of September 29, 1924.

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2nd October, 1924.

### CHANGE OF HEART

BY M. K. GANDHI

Hitherto it has been a struggle and a yearning for a change of heart among Englishmen who compose the Government of India. That change has still to come. But the struggle must for the moment be transferred to a change of heart among the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Before they dare think of freedom they must be brave enough to love one another, to tolerate one another's religion even prejudices and superstitions and to trust one another. This requires faith in oneself. And faith in oneself is faith in God. If we have that faith we shall cease to fear one another. —29th Sept. 1924.

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### MAHATMA GANDHI'S FAST

BY S. J. RAJENDRA PRASAD

Recent events culminating in constant fighting between Mussalmans and Hindus have cast a gloom all over the country and compelled Mahatma Gandhi to observe a fast of 21 days as a penance for his own and his erring countrymen's sins and as a prayer to the Almighty to lift this nightmare of communal bitterness and anger from off this land. Those who have followed the march of events during the last five years are not altogether without a ray of hope even in this almost impenetrable darkness. The part which England had in settling the terms of peace with Turkey roused the Mussalmans against it to a white heat. The atrocities which came with martial law in the Punjab brought shame and humiliation and resentment to the hearts of all Indians alike. Both these sources of discontent and bitterness against the Government were, when combined, enough to rouse the whole country.

Mahatma Gandhi, with the vision of a seer, saw the gathering storm and conceived the method of non-violent non-co-operation which was intended to fight against both the Government and mob outburst at the same time. There was an extraordinary upheaval in India and among none more than among the Mussalmans who felt that their religion was being attacked. It made the whole country, and particularly the Mussalmans, more sensitive and jealous than ever regarding their religious rights. It was the genius of Mahatma Gandhi which harnessed and directed in channels, beneficial to the counter, the forces of intense excitement which had been generated. Then came the time when most of the leaders, who had exercised great sway over the feelings and passions of the masses, had been put out of the way by a relentless policy of repression. The forces, which, when well regulated, had almost brought India to the verge of a peaceful and bloodless revolution, were now to work their havoc. When the leaders came out of jail, one after another, they found the situation getting out of their hands, and the differences that arose in the Congress ranks kept them all engaged in settling their accounts with one another to the neglect of this vital danger. The result was that by the time Mahatma Gandhi was released and while he was still in a state of serious illness, mob riots had already begun in different parts of the country and the two religious communities had become terribly estranged.

That Mahatma Gandhi has inflicted upon himself the severe penance of 21 day's fast shows that his teachings, delivered through the press and on the platform, have proved to have been uttered in vain. A more drastic remedy was needed in order to deal effectively with the fanaticism that has lately been rampant in the country. His faith in his teaching of non-violence and non-retaliation is as bright as ever; and who knows whether this act of supreme self-sacrifice is not intended by unknown and unseen forces to solve what appears at present to be an insoluble problem? Would to God that the prayer rising from the hearts of his countrymen may create a band of earnest and devoted workers pledged to restore brotherly relations between Hindus and Mussalmans! Would to God that it may give us courage to stick to the right, to cling to the truth and to urge our erring countrymen in no uncertain terms that they should refrain from mutual recrimination and embrace one another in love! Would to God that it may create in us a sense of

recognition of the rights of others and of appreciation of the feelings and sentiments of others, on which alone true tolerance can be based ! May this *tapasya* bear fruit and may it lead to peace and good-will among all the people of this country !

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### TWO NOTABLE STATEMENTS

[Last week there was published in *Young India* Mahatma Gandhi's own statement about what happened when the decision to fast for twenty one days was taken. Two statements have been given to the Press by the Ali Brothers, which throw light upon the decision itself and also explain further its meaning. They are much too valuable to pass out of recollection amid the ordinary news of the day and I am publishing them afresh. I would add, before doing so, that I have been profoundly impressed by the teaching of Islam which the former statement in its concluding portion contains. This great passage in the Quran had never been explained to me before, and I am thankful to know it. C. F. A.]

#### MAULANA MAHOMED ALI'S STATEMENT

I had argued and argued passionately and entreatingly, but I had argued in vain. And it was 3 o'clock in the morning before I left Mahatmaji that night. I had, however, succeeded in this, that the vow of fasting, which seemed to me irrevocable in all circumstances, was made revocable on one condition, and that condition was that my big brother, for whom I had vicariously pleaded as my last resort, was coming on the urgent telegraphic invitation of the Mahatma himself, and if he could convince him that the fast was wrong, the vow would not be deemed irrevocable, and the fast could be broken. Such was his confidence, as he told me, in Shaṅkat's "robust commonsense and his God-fearing nature."

The big brother has come, and he has seen : but he has not yet conquered. For so far no one has placed in his big hands the only weapon that can be effective in a struggle such as this. My own belief is that if either community made up its mind to offer a complete surrender and say that whatever the other community may do to it, it would not retaliate, peace would be restored and the gainer in the end would be not so much the community to which the surrender was made, but the one that has made the surrender.

As a Mussalman, I pray that God will give my community the strength to make the surrender, as my brother and I have personally

done long ago. For the benefit of my co-religionists I recite the parable of non-violence which Allah preached to the entire brotherhood of man through the Quran as through the Bible.

He says: "Recite unto them the tale of the two sons of Adam with truth. When they both offered an offering, it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other.

"The one said: I will most certainly slay thee. The other said: Allah only accepts from those that guard against evil.

"Thou wilt stretch forth thy hand towards me to slay me, but I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards thee to slay thee; surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

"Surely I wish that thou shouldst bear the sin committed against me and thine own sin. So thou wouldst be of the companions of the fire and those that are the unjust."

"Then his mind facilitated unto him the slaying of his brother, so he slew him; then he became one of the losers.

"Then Allah sent a crow digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body of his brother. He said: Woe unto me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? So he became of those that regret.

"For this reason did we prescribe to the children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and certainly our apostles came unto them with clear arguments, but even after that many of them act extravagantly in the land."

This is the story, not of the two sons of a certain person called Adam, but the parable of mankind. Cain revelling in his strength, as he believed it to be, slew his brother Abel, but it was not Cain, the slayer, that was really strong, but Abel who had the courage to die without stretching forth his hand against his kith and kin. And it was Cain that was the loser. The end proved it to the hilt. The murderer, riding in his strength, did not for long gloat over the work that his hand had wrought. He desired to hide at once the dead body of his brother and his own shame therein. It was then that he confessed that he was not really strong but "lacked strength," to such an extent that from a man, the noblest of God's creation, he should become the imitator of the contemptible crow. "So he became of those that regret." Real strength lies in self-restraint and in



withholding one's hand even against the aggressor, and every life saved through forgiveness is not one life saved, but the life of all mankind.

Christ taught the same lesson as Moses had in reality taught before him, but they heeded him not. The last of the Prophets had to teach that lesson all over again; and can it be a matter of pride to the Mussalmans, if "even after that, many of them act extravagantly"? I am proud of Islam, as I am proud of nothing else; and it is because of that pride that I wish the Mussalman to imitate Abel and not Cain. His must be the surrender to-day if he seeks to convert mankind to the Prophet's own way of life. And he it must be, who should say to his brother, even if the latter is the aggressor, "If thou wilt stretch forth thy hand against me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards thee to slay thee." This should be, not for fear of his brother, stronger in numbers and greater in wealth and knowledge, but for fear of Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

All this I have said as a Mussalman to Mussalmans. But I cannot divest myself of the office of the President of the Nation's Congress, and as such I am a trustee not only for Mussalmans, but also for Hindus and Sikhs and Christians and Parsis and Jews and for every one that calls himself a son of India. In my capacity as a National Trustee I make the same appeal to my Hindu brothers as I have made to the Muslims and I eagerly await the response of both.

[Maulana Shaukat Ali has given to the press a briefer statement, which was shown to Mahatma Gandhi before its publication. The words, that he quotes from the conversation, have therefore been verified by Mahatmaji himself.]

#### MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI'S STATEMENT

On receipt of Mahatmaji's urgent wire, I left Bombay by the next train. My brother informed me on my arrival that Mahatmaji had at last consented, that "if Shaukat Ali could convince me that I was in error I would break my fast."

I had a long and frank talk with Mahatmaji. He has not convinced me fully, nor have I yet succeeded in convincing him, but I do not despair. However, unless the Mussalmans and Hindus of India unitedly promise me their fullest support in suppressing these Hindu Muslim

quarrels, I cannot find it in my heart to press my point with him any further. Mahatmaji told me that there was a time when God had put effect in his words and both Hindus and Mussalmans had listened to him and carried out his wishes cheerfully. "I find " he added, "that my words have lost their power, which to me means there is something wrong with me and God has deserted me. I am fasting and praying that God may come back to me and restore effect to my words. As a Hindu, I know that when in trouble one has to practise *tapasya*; and while in jail I learned about the life of the Prophet too. Whenever he was in difficulties, he used to fast and pray. Until God gives me His grace, I mean to fast and suffer and pray hard."

After hearing this, my only hope was that the response all over the country to his appeal could be instantaneous; and if the Mussalmans and the Hindus of Delhi come forward and settle their quarrels, I think, I shall be in a strong position to go to him and add my own prayers to the prayers of the rest of India that he will break his fast.

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### MORE MESSAGES

The following notes by Mr. C. F. Andrews, then Acting editor appeared in *Young India* of October 2, 1924.

#### OUR DUTY

There is one thing above all others that this sudden crisis has brought home to us. We have all of us to turn away from our own self-seeking to God. As Mahatma Gandhi has told us in memorable words which will become historic :

"It seems as if God had been dethroned; and we have to re-instate Him in our hearts."

That is where the wrong lies and we must ourselves do penance for it, each in our own way, before the wrong can be righted. These lower passions of ours, which have brought us into so great misery have been acting in a terrible manner to the debasement of our higher nature, where God alone should be enthroned and enshrined. We have been too eager to hear and believe every evil report and to spread the evil still further by repeating it. We have not rejoiced only in the truth. 'Love beareth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. Where has been that love? We have seen it embodied in Mahatma

Gandhi, and it has put us all to shame; but we have not yet embodied it in our own lives.

There are two things, at the present time, which we cannot do, if we would be true to that higher nature which God has bestowed upon us. We cannot keep enmity in our hearts and we cannot retaliate. There are, at the same time, two things which we ought to do and can do, if we will. We ought to show active love to one another and to confess openly if we have done wrong.

I believe with all my heart that these are the marks by which God's children can be recognised in the world today, not only in India but also in China and in Europe. This is the meaning of Christ's words, when He says: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

Let us recognise that the problem which we face goes far deeper and further than India itself. The internecine strife which has decimated Europe and this new and terrible strife which is driving China into ruin are truly of the same character as the fratricidal struggle which has just begun in our own midst. Europe and China have each in turn taken up the sword and have found the sword turned backward against them. Fatally, ruinously, the truth has been learnt afresh which declares that "They who take the sword shall perish with the sword." But in India we have been given by God a unique opportunity of learning a higher lesson. It is impossible for me to put that lesson more clearly than through the story which Maulana Mahomed Ali has told from the Quran.

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#### S. A. WAIZ : A CHRISTIAN'S BLESSING

An Indian Christian from the Punjab named Mr. S. A. Waiz has sent me the following letter which I gladly publish:—

"However, I may differ with him in his political views, his methods of carrying on the present agitation, with a view to the final consummation of the attainment of Swaraj, I must say, that in his sincerity, saintliness of character, his love for his country, his frank admissions of his own faults, I know of none in the world to-day, who surpasses Mahatmaji. There are some who jeer at his present action; there are others, who have repeatedly said that by sheer self-imposed martyrdom, he expects to become at once an apotheosis of patriotism in India. Could there be anything more unkind, more unreasonable, more cruel?

Who also in India to-day can be a link between Hindus, Muslims and Christians,—furthermore, between Indians and the English? There in Delhi under the roof of a Muslim, and at the feet of a Hindu, meet Christians, Mussalmans and Hindus together in prayer for unity in India.

Mahatma Gandhi has on more than one occasion declared that he is not a Christian. But the tenets of Christianity have never before been interpreted in so simple and intelligible a manner by any Western Missionary in India as by Mahatmaji's present action. I have been a Christian all my life, but I must confess that the fundamental truth of Christianity I never understood before. When I had read the news of Mahatmaji's fast for penance and prayer, tears came out of my eyes, and for the first time in my life I realised the meaning of the Cross. A Hindu has drawn me closer to Christ. May God bless him! I have never had the good fortune of meeting him, but this is my frank unbiassed and fearless opinion of him.

May my Lord be with him in this great trial! May he spare him for the guidance of millions of people in the country at this most critical juncture."

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#### BARODADA'S MESSAGE

The following telegram was received from Borodada on September 26th. Andrews, Care Mahomed Ali, Delhi:

"Fear and hope struggling for Mahatmaji in my mind. Wire news about his health. Borodada."

This telegram appears to me to express, in the briefest possible compass, the feelings of the people of India at the present moment. Among the poorest and most illiterate, as among the most learned and the greatest in the land, the thought of Mahatmaji's penance has been uppermost in the mind. Fears are mingled with hopes and hopes are mingled with fears. But as Borodada has written in a letter, which he has sent to Mahatma Gandhi, "Our faith is in God alone." It is out of such times of intense feeling that the mind and the heart are set free from habits of convention and new pathways of moral enterprise are discovered.

## SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA'S STATEMENT

I gladly reprint, for wider circulation, Swami Shraddhananda's moving appeal:—

"In order to restore peace to Mahatma Gandhi's mind it is essential that all sensational headlines should be stopped. Let there be no comment made upon these unfortunate quarrels of the Hindus and Mussalmans. Mahatmaji has started his 21 days' fast. He will take only water. To appease the fury of this fire Mahatmaji has kept his sacred person before the Indians for sacrifice. Let everybody do his utmost to stop it. There is no occasion of giving details, and neither I have got full light myself on it. But suddenly an idea has flashed through my mind that the Hindu Muslim papers should give up writing commentaries on each other. I believe that Hindus would stop writing anything about the Mussalmans after reading my message. I hope that they will abstain from making comments, even in defence; at least for these twenty-one days. Nothing can be decided so far. Telegrams have been sent to 125 national leaders who will meet in a Conference to devise means to assuage Mahatma's sorrow. Mahatmaji is fasting and praying and let us join his prayer every morning.

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*9th October, 1924*

## MY REFUGE

BY M. K. GANDHI

To-day is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. O! God, make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt.

Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.

During these days of grace, privilege and peace, I have hummed to myself a hymn we often sing at the Satyagrahashram. It is so good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free rendering of

it with the reader. The words of the hymn better express my state than anything else I can write.

Here they are:—

My honour, O! God, is in Thy keeping;  
 Thou art ever my Refuge,  
 For Thou art Protector of the weak.  
 It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners;  
 I am a sinner of old, help me  
 Thou to cross this ocean of darkness.  
 It is Thine to remove the sin  
 And the misery of Mankind.  
 Be gracious to Tulsidas  
 And make him Thy devotee.

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*16th October, 1924*

## THE FAST THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN

BY C. F. ANDREWS

All through these days of penitence and hope, at Delhi one chapter from the Hebrew prophets has been in my mind. It is the passage read in Christian churches on Ash Wednesday,—the day which commemorates Christ's fast and temptation in the wilderness. It reveals the heart of Asia, as I have learnt to know it well during my life lived in the East. It discovers the inwardness of true religion.

Let me say, in a parenthesis, that it is the spectacle of the outward forms in religion, which first impresses the Western traveller—the temples, the mosque, the pilgrim shrines, the ceremonials of worship. But a deeper insight into every faith which had its birth in Asia, springing from among the people,—very often the unlettered and the unlearned,—shows that the outward is as nothing compared with the inward, which alone is acceptable to God. I can remember how my first Urdu teacher, who was a Mussalman, told me a story about one who had fulfilled all the outward precepts of religion, yet everything was tainted by one stain of pride in the inward heart. When the Day of Judgment came, he saw his outward deeds shrivel up like a scroll in the fire. Only when he cried out in his agony 'God be merciful to me', was his soul set free from pride and his heart set at rest.

Thus it is, that the Hebrew prophet turns from the outward observances of a fast to the inner reality. Its final test with God is humility and service of the poor. The passage is so great, and the English translation of it so noble, that I shall not spoil it by any paraphrase. It reads as follows:

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression.

Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul, to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sack-cloth and ashes!

Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring in the poor that are cast out of thy house?

When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee. The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

Then shalt thou cry and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry and He shall say. Here am I.

If thou take away from thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger of scorn, and the speaking of vanity:

If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul: then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness shall be as the noon day.

And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make thee to prosper; and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

There can be no question in the mind of any one who thinks deeply, that Mahatma Gandhi's fast has driven men's thoughts inwards. It has forced them to face realities; to be unsatisfied with any mere outward profession, or show of outward repentance for what was so terribly wrong. Every word that has come from him, during the fast itself, has shown more and more clearly the inwardness of the fast as far as he himself was concerned, and the purification which it has wrought in his own inner spirit.

But how can we test ourselves? What is the fast that God has chosen?

The tests are simple which the Hebrew prophet puts forward. Though uttered so long ago they stand searchingly true for our own day. They are the two I have mentioned,—humility and the service of the poor. He cries aloud:

“Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact your labours from the poor! Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the first of wickedness. Ye shall not fast thus to make your voice heard on high! This is not the fast that God hath chosen!”

There has undoubtedly been a diminution of strife for the time being: there is no longer visibly in evidence the pointing of the finger of scorn and the speaking of vanity.

But is this change permanent? Does it yet go heart-deep? Is it a lasting peace, or merely an uncertain truce?

It may be that today, as of old when the prophet spoke, the second test will give the true answer to such questions. For if there has not been born, out of this present heart-searching, a genuine consideration for the sufferings of the poor, then the fast has not gone inward it is not the fast that God has chosen for us.

If I speak out my whole mind, it is here where most of all I still have my own doubts. I cannot see how Hindu-Muslim unity is to be permanent, while the curse of untouchability remains unremoved on the one hand and while Muslim illiteracy and depression, especially in Bengal, remains altogether unrelieved on the other. The poor still cry, and there is none to help them. We go on exacting their labours. In the terribly expressive phrase of the prophet, we hide ourselves from our own flesh.’

‘Is this the fast that God has chosen?’

As I have watched and waited, day by day, I have especially noted one thing. The poorest, who have come for *darshan* have always been the most unselfish and the most reverent. When I have told them that it would be kinder not to disturb Mahatmaji in his weakness, while he was resting, at one word of entreaty they have gone away. If again, when he was awake, they were taken up to see him, one look was enough for them and then they went away. Some, who were *Chamers*, were the most obedient and reverent of all. It has often touched me very deeply to witness this, during these



very anxious days, and I have understood better the words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

While untouchability remains, Hindu-Muslim unity can never be secure. This weakness and disease in Hinduism does not affect Hinduism alone, but the whole body. While vast illiteracy and grinding poverty remain among the Mussalman poor, in Bengal and elsewhere, Hindu-Muslim unity can never be secure. For where one member of the body suffers, all the members suffer with it. Truly, it would be a noble effort and a noble striving, if all the good-will and brotherhood which has been brought to fruition by this fast were to be given in loving service for the removal of these burdens which are crushing down the poor. If this were done the words of the prophet might come true in India in our own day:—

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thine health shall spring forth speedily and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou cry, and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here am I."

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16th October, 1924

### HOW THE FAST WAS BROKEN

BY C. F. ANDREWS

In the evening of the day before the fast was broken Mahatma Gandhi was wonderfully bright and cheerful. Many of his most intimate friends came to see him as he lay upon his bed on the open roof of the house, which was flooded by the moonlight. It was only four days before *Purnima*.

The time came for evening prayers. As usual, he called everyone who was in the house, including the Congress volunteers in attendance, to join him in the evening worship. The passage from the Bhagavad Gita, which is recited every night at Sabarmati Ashram, was said in unison. It tells about the complete conquest of the soul over the body's senses and appetites. At its close it speaks of the blessed peace in the heart of the one who conquers. As I looked at that bright face before me I could well understand the meaning of the words that were being recited.

After the Gita, one of Kabir's hymns was sung by Balkrishna. Later on, the same evening, I asked for a translation, and I was told

that Kabir in his hymn sings as a penitent to God, calling himself the chief of sinners. In God alone is his refuge. From experience I had learnt that hymns in this mood gave him most pleasure of all during his penance and fast. A very wonderful exposition of the Katha Upanishad followed by Vinoba, then a long silence. The friends parted one by one, and he was left alone.

Before four o'clock in the morning of the next day we were called for the morning prayers. There was no moon and it was very dark. A chill breeze was blowing from the east. The morning star was shining in a clear open sky above the Ridge. The phantom shapes of trees that rustled in the wind should be seen from the open room, where we were all seated. Bapu was wrapped warm in a dark shawl, and I asked him whether he had slept well. He replied: "Yes, very very well indeed!" It was a happiness to notice at once that his voice was stronger than the morning before, instead of weaker. It would be difficult to describe the emotion of that silence which followed on this last day of the long fast as we sat there waiting for all the household to assemble. We were all remembering that the final day had come. All the windows of the room where he was resting were open, and I sat gazing, now upon the figure reclining darkly upon the bed, and now out upon the stars.

The hymn that was sung, at this special morning worship, was one that was a great favourite with Mahatmaji. It is in Gujarati, and I had to get its meaning from Balkrishna afterwards. What it says is, this: "The way to God is only meant for heroes: it is not meant for shrinkers. There must be self-abandonment to the full. Only those, who are ready to give up all for His sake, can attain. As the diver dives down into the sea for pearls, even so heroic souls dive deep in their search for God."

After the prayers, the early morning hours passed very quietly indeed; but before eight o'clock a very large number of visitors had begun to arrive. Some went away again after being allowed to have their *darshan*. Others stayed on, waiting till the fast was broken. At about 10 A.M. Mahatmaji called for me and said: "Can you remember the words of my favourite Christian hymn?" I said: "Yes, shall I sing it to you now?"

"Not now," he answered, "but I have in my mind that when I break my fast, we might have a little ceremony, expressing religious unity. I should like the Imam Sahib to recite the opening verses of

the Quran. Then I would like you to sing the Christian hymn, you know the one I mean, it begins 'When I survey the wondrous Cross' and ends with the words :—

' Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.'

And then last of all, I should like Vinoba to recite from the Upanishads and Balkrishna to sing the Vaishnava hymn, describing the true Vaishnava."

When I had gone downstairs I told Krishnadas about the arrangements. He was very ill that day and I knew that it would give him great happiness to be able to keep the ceremony in spirit with us, though he could not be there in body before noon. All the leaders and friends had assembled. The ladies also were present, who had loved to do him service. As the time drew near, I went upstairs again and he asked me to see to it personally that every one should be allowed to be present including the servants of the house. Before this, quite early in the day, I had brought up the sweeper to see him, who had been serving us very faithfully and he had spoken to him some very kindly words and had given him a smile of gratitude for the services he had rendered.

Now at last the midday hour had come and the fast was to be broken. The doctors were called first by themselves, and he gave them the most touching words of thanks for all their love and devotion to him. The Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib was called, who had also cheered and helped him through his fast as a doctor and a friend. Maulana Mahomed Ali his most tender and loving host followed, and without any further order all went quietly into his room and greeted him with affection and sat down. The ladies who were present sat near the bedside. Swami Shradhdhananda sat at the foot of the bed with his eyes closed in prayer. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Ali Brothers were all seated together near the bed with many others.

The Imam Sahib, who had been his closest companion in South Africa and at Sabarmati Ashram, recited the wonderful Arabic opening words of the Quran, chanting its majestic language, which tells of God the most Compassionate and the most Merciful, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and the Helper of mankind. It ends with the prayer for His help to be guided in the path of righteousness and not in the way of sinners. After this, as had been arranged, the

Christian hymn was sung. Then followed some very beautiful passages from the Upanishads, which were recited by Vinoba. Three of the slokas may be translated thus:—

“Those alone can realise the Divine Light within, who have purified themselves through the constant practice of truth, self-discipline, meditation and continence.”

“By ceaseless pursuit of truth, the Rishis of old attained their goal, even the supreme Truth.”

“Let not my words belie my thoughts, nor my thoughts belie my words. Let the Divine Light always shine before me. Let not my knowledge fail me. I shall always say what is right and speak the truth.”

After the ‘Om, Shanti, Shanti’ had been uttered with the deepest reverence, Balkrishna began to sing. He sang the song of the true Vaishnava. “He is the true Vaishnava who knows and feels another’s woes as his own. Ever ready to serve, he never boasts. He bows to every one and despises no one, keeping his thought, word and deed pure. Blessed is the mother of such an one. He reverences every woman as his mother. He keeps an equal mind and does not stain his lips with falsehood; nor does he touch another’s wealth. No bonds of attachment can hold him. Ever in tune with Ramanama, his body possesses in itself all places of pilgrimage. Free from greed and deceit, passion and anger, this is the true Vaishnava.”

It was strangely beautiful to think, almost aloud, as each of these passages were uttered, how appropriate they were; how the ideal had been so nearly reached, along the hard pathway of suffering, by the one who was lying there about to break his fast. Everyone felt their appropriateness and hearts were drawn together.

Before the actual breaking of the fast, Mahatma Gandhi turned to Maulana Mahomed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He spoke to them; and as he spoke his emotion was so deep that in his bodily weakness his voice could hardly be heard except by those who were nearest of all to him. He told them how, for thirty years Hindu Muslim unity had been his chief concern, and he had not yet succeeded in achieving it. He did not know what was the will of God, but on this day he would beseech them to promise to lay down their lives if necessary for the cause. The Hindus must be able to offer their worship with perfect freedom

in their temples and the Mussalmans be able to say their *azan* and prayers with perfect freedom in their mosques. If this elementary freedom of worship could not everywhere be secured, than neither Hinduism nor Islam had any meaning.

Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad renewed their solemn pledge and promise on behalf of the Mussalman community.

Then Dr. Ansari brought forward some orange juice and Mahatma Gandhi drank it. So the fast was broken. The joy and thankfulness of those who were present cannot adequately be described. Throughout it all, as congratulations poured in upon him, Mahatma remained unmoved, quietly resting. Soon the room was left empty. Mahatma Gandhi remained in silence and the great strain of the breaking of the fast was over.

One thought was present with me, all the while, throughout this day of rejoicing. I could not help but think continually of Krishnadas, whose devotion to Mahatma Gandhi had been so unspeakably deep and true all through the long days and nights of the fast. He could not be present owing to his illness. But his happiness was none the less pure and full in spite of his bodily absence. When I went over to see him his face was filled with joy.

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#### A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE WEST

The following resolution has been received by Mahatma Gandhi, during his fast, from the Independent Labour Party in Conisborough, England:—

“We, the members of the Conisborough Branch of the Independent Labour Party, have watched with great interest the efforts of the Swaraj Movement in India to obtain political freedom, and we wish to assure you that we, together with a considerable section of the British public, have the utmost sympathy with your aims and admiration of your methods.

“We believe, that claims founded on Truth and Justice are always best helped forward by strictly pacifist measures; while, on the other hand, a claim, or attitude, that is upheld by force, and not by Truth, must assuredly fail, when the upholding force decays,—which it must do, by the Law of Truth, on which human evolution is based.

## THE INNER MEANING OF THE FAST 101

"We are deeply ashamed of the persecution, which you and the Movement have suffered from the British Government; and we wish to express our abhorrence of their methods, and our complete dissociation from such misuse of authority.

We are, honoured sir, on behalf of the above Branch.

Your most sincerely,

John H. BROCKLESBY.

*Chairman.*

Geo. Ray.

*Secretary."*

Those, who have sent this resolution, are working men engaged in manual labour. In spite of much that has been reactionary in the policy of the late Labour Government, with regard to India, it should be remembered that there are working men and women in England, whose numbers may literally be counted by hundreds of thousands, among whom the ideal of Ahimsa, for which India stands, has become a living truth. They may not, as yet, be sufficiently strong in their influence to sway the whole Labour Party; but their weight in the long run is certain to tell, because it represents a moral and spiritual force; and this, in the end, is bound to prevail over the more material and selfish interests of labour.

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*23rd October, 1924.*

## THE INNER MEANING OF THE FAST

BY MAHADEO DESAI

During the days spent at Delhi, I happened to read, in the Unity Number of the *Bengalee*, the translation of an article from *Navajivan*. This at once appeared to me to be an incorrect interpretation of Mahatmaji's position. When I asked about it, I found that Mahadeo had himself already noticed it with great pain. He therefore read over to Mahatma Gandhi both the original Gujarati and the translator's English version. Mahatmaji expressed to me his opinion that the translation was really a travesty. As the article contained very important material I have felt the necessity of publishing a correct translation by the author himself. May I add two things? (i) If

translations into English from the pages of *Navajivan* are made, permission should be obtained from the Editor before publishing. (11) Apart from the article in question, I was greatly impressed by the quality of the material on 'Hindu-Muslim Unity' published by the *Bengalee*.—C. F. A.

We, who were privileged to be with Gandhiji, when he took that momentous decision to fast for 21 days, were also privileged to engage him in long discussions during the first week of the fast and my article produces the substance of two important conversations—one with me and one with Maulana Shaukat Ali.

'Do you see the meaning of my fast on account of the Bombay and Chauri Chaura incidents?' he asked me. 'Yes' said I. 'Then why cannot you see the meaning of this fast?'

'There you fasted by way of penance for what you thought was a crime committed by you. There is no such thing here. There is not the semblance of an offence that may be attributed to you.'

'What a misconception! In Chauri Chaura the culprits were those who had never seen me, never known me. Today the culprits are those who know me and even profess to love me.'

'Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali' I said 'are trying their best to quench the conflagration. But it is beyond them. Some men may be beyond their reach, even your reach. What can they do, what can you do? The situation will take time to improve.'

'That is another story' he answered, 'Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali are pure gold. They are trying their best, I know. But the situation is out of our hands today. It was in our hands six months ago. I know my fast will upset them. Indirectly it might have an

effect on their minds, but it was not meant to produce an effect on any one's mind.'

'That's all right,' I replied. 'But you have yet to tell me where your error lay for which you are doing this penance.'

'My error! Why, I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to befriend Muslims. I asked them to lay their lives and their property at the disposal of the Mussalmans for the protection of their Holy Places. Even today I am asking them to practise Ahimsa, to settle quarrels by dying but not by killing. And what do I find to be the result? How many temples have been desecrated? How many sisters come to me with complaints? As I was saying to Hakimji yesterday, Hindu women are in mortal terror of Mussalman *goondas*. In many places they fear to go out alone. I had a letter from—. How can I bear the way in which his little children were molested? How can I now ask the Hindus to put up with everything patiently? I gave them the assurance that the friendship of Mussalmans was bound to bear good fruit. I asked them to befriend them, regardless of the result. It is not in my power today to make good that assurance, neither is it in the power of Mahomed Ali or Shaukat Ali. Who listens to me? And yet I must ask the Hindus even today to die and not to kill. I can only do so by laying down my own life. I can teach them the way to die by my own example. There is no other way...I launched Non-cooperation. Today I find that people are non-co-operating against one another, without any regard for non-violence. What is the reason? Only this, that I myself am not completely non-violent. If I were practising



non-violence to perfection, I should not have seen the violence I see around me today. My fast is therefore a penance. I blame no one. I blame only myself. I have lost the power wherewith to appeal to people. Defeated and helpless I must submit my petition in His Court. Only He will listen, no one else.'

It was a torrent that I could hardly catch, much less reproduce.' I asked at the end: 'But, Bapu, should the penance take only this shape, and no other? Is fasting prescribed by our religion?' 'Certainly', said he; 'What did the Rishis of old do? It is unthinkable that they ate anything during their penances—in some cases, gone through in caves, and for hundreds of years. Parvati who did penance to win Shiva would not touch even the leaves of trees, much less fruit or food. Hinduism is full of penance and prayer. I have decided on this fast with deeper deliberation than I gave to any of my previous fasts. I had such a fast in my mind, even when I conceived and launched Non-co-operation. At that time, I said to myself, 'I am placing this terrible weapon in the hands of the people. If it is abused I must pay the price by laying down my life.' That moment seems to have arrived today. The object of the previous fasts was limited. The object of this is unlimited. and there is boundless love at the back of it. I am today bathing in that ocean of love.'

Maulana Shaukat Ali came the next day. Maulana Mahomed Ali had built much on his coming, for he had fondly hoped that he would probably shake Gandhiji's resolve. Indeed Gandhiji had promised him that he would give up the vow if Shaukat or he convinced him that the fast was morally or in any other way wrong. The long talk with him was however of no avail, as far

as the continuance of the fast was concerned, but it threw even more light on the inner-meaning.

'What have we done, Mahatmaji, to remedy the situation?' he exclaimed, 'Almost nothing! You have been preaching through your paper, but you have yet undertaken no long journey. Pray travel through the affected areas and purify the atmosphere. This fast is hardly the way to fight the wrong.'

Gandhiji replied: 'It is for me a pure matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself, and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us today. Pray do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate. And naturally, there have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiations about their arbitration I heard of Kohat. I asked myself, 'What are you going to do now?' I am an irrepressible optimist, but I always base my optimism on solid facts. You are also an irrepressible optimist, but you at times base yours on sand. No one will listen to you today. In Visanagar in Gujarat they gave a cold shoulder to Mr. Abbas Tyabji and Mahadeo. In Ahmedabad a storm was nipped in the bud. Some trouble was brewing in Umreth when I left Gujarat. That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear today. To them I want to show by my own example the way to die.

"Fight I do not mind if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But today it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record? How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best. But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them."

'No' rejoined Shaukat Ali, 'You have not failed. They listened to you; they were listening to you. In your absence they had other advisers. They listened to their advice and took to evil ways. They will still see the folly of their ways, I am sure. You have much to reduce the poison in the popular mind. I would not bother about these disturbances at all. I would simply go and tell them, "Devils, play this game to your hearts" content. God is still there. You may kill one another. You cannot kill Him." Do not, Sir, come in the way of the Lord. You are wrestling with Him. Let Him have His way.'

'I wrestling with Him!' exclaimed Gandhiji in surprise. 'If there is pride or defiance in me it is all over with me. Dear man, this fast is the result of several days' continued prayers. I have got up from sleep at 3 o' clock in the night and have asked Him what to do. On the 17th of September the answer came like a flash! If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully God-fearing spirit, and in the house of a God-fearing Mussalman at that. My religion says that only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have

read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed, and forbade others to copy him. Some one asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. 'Because I live on food divine,' he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this moment I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Mussalman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam which you have for it. After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, to appeal to both the communities, It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it.'

At this point Shaukat Ali changed the line of his argument. 'Are you not,' said he, 'even bound to consider what a shock it will be to the country, this long fast of yours?'

'No! For man so often deceives himself! He often does things to please others, which he should have avoided. Religion therefore teaches him to stand before the world after having taken a particular resolve. What

vanity, to think that the world would be shocked at one's own great penance! And whose wishes are we to consider? There would be no limit. Had Rama stopped to consult and argue, he would never have gone on *Vanavasa* and rid the earth of its suffering. He waited for no one's advice. He went forth. For he prized his plighted word more than his life. Only he can take great resolves who has indomitable faith in God and has fear of God.'

'One more question' said Shaukat Ali as he stood up to go, 'Do you need to consult no one before arriving at such a decision? You need not even take into consideration the effect it would have on your health or body?'

'No. It is a matter between me and my Maker. And if I must consult someone, I had better not take the vow at all. You talk of the effect on my health and body? Well, if I am too weak to stand it I may die. What is the body worth? Whilst I was in jail I read with rapturous delight the lives of the Companions of the Prophet. There is a story that Hazrat Umar sent a present of 500 *dinars* to some one. He shrank from it, and began to cry. His wife asked him why he was crying. He said, '*Mxya*, unreality,—has come to me. What will happen to me?' The *dinars* were a present from such a holy man as Hazrat Umar. But he shrank from it because it was unreal evanescent. And so is life. Let God keep this body if He has still to make some use of it. Let it perish if it has fulfilled His purpose. In fact, I had thought of going on a permanent vow of fasting if matters did not improve after the fast terminated. Hakimji asked me not to think of it. 'How can I cast it out of my mind?', said I, 'It is in my bones, it is part of my very being I would ask Mussalmans to befriend the Hindus, if they think it

is not contrary to their religion. If they think and tell me it is contrary to their religion, then I am sure I should have no cause to live any more. I should die. I had a plain talk with Khwaja Hassan Nizami Sahib also the other day. I told him, 'Why do you try to convert the waifs and strays and the untouchables? Better convert me, so that after I am converted many more might follow me. If those poor people embrace Islam, they will not do so because they understand the beauty of Islam, but for other reasons. Islam will not be a whit richer for them.'

It was an impressive dialogue. I have not even done bare justice to it. Shaukat Ali seemed quite overpowered. As he rose he said, "Three things I pray for every day; the first is Hindu-Muslim Unity; the second, that my mother may live to see Islam and India free; the third, that Mahatma Gandhi's mission may be fulfilled."

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*6th November, 1924.*

## HYMNS OF MAHATMAJI'S FAST

[During the fast, in the very early morning before sunrise, Balakrishna used to sing to us the simple hymns of Hindu religious worship, that were food to Mahatma Gandhi throughout the whole day. In the evening, when it grew dark, Balakrishna would sing to us again; and his song would remain with Mahatmaji soothing him to rest. I asked Mahadeo to translate some of these for me, because I could only very imperfectly follow them and sometimes mistook the meaning altogether, though the music haunted me. When he had translated them,

I was captivated by the beauty of the thoughts, just as I had been already by the beauty of the music. I was also delighted to find that 'Borodada's Dream' had actually come true, and that the religious heart of mankind is actually one. Below are given three of the most enchanting hymns.—C. F. A.]

## I

The way of the Lord is for heroes : it is not meant for shrinkers.

Offer first your life and your all: then take the name of the Lord.

He only tastes of the Divine Cup who gives up his son, his wife, his wealth, his own life.

For, verily, he who seeks for pearls must dive to the bottom of the sea, endangering his very existence.

Death he regards as naught: he forgets all the miseries of mind and body.

He who stands on the shore, fearing to take the plunge, attains naught.

The pathway of love is the ordeal of fire. The shrinkers turn away from it.

Those, who take the plunge into the fire, attain eternal bliss.

Those, who stand afar, looking on, are scorched by the flames.

Love is a priceless thing, only to be won at the cost of death.

Those who live to die, these attain; for they have shed all thoughts of self.

Those heroic souls, who are rapt in the love of the Lord, they are the true lovers. Pritam says, it is given to them alone to see the Lila of the Lord by night and day.

## II

So long as the truth is not known by thee, all thy austerities are of no avail, even as untimely showers that serve no purpose.

What avail are ablution and ceremonial and alms-giving? What avail are the Sadhu's equipments,—his ashes smeared all over his body and his matted locks?

What avail are penances and pilgrimages, the counting of beads, the mark on the forehead, the twig of tulsi, the drinking of Ganges water?

What avail are the knowledge of the Vedas, the grammarian's rules and all the arts? What avail is philosophic erudition and a knowledge of letters?

All these things are devices, which merely satisfy the outer man. So long as the truth is not known by thee, thy life is fruitlessly thrown away, says Narasinha.

## III

He is my captive. I have purchased him. Oh! I have purchased Him!

Some say He is too light: others say He is too heavy. I have weighed Him well, and know that I have full measure.

Some say He is too cheap: others say He is too dear. Some say He is priceless. Oh! I have paid my full price.

I paid my full price in the streets of Brindāban, whilst He was at play with Radha.

No one knows, how I have secured Him. He knows. For, says Mira, He has only kept the pledge He gave me in my previous birth.

He alone is mine, naught else. I have left my father and mother, my kith and kin; in company with Sadhus have I lost all sense of shame. For He alone is mine.



I fled and sought refuge with the saints and wept to see the world. I wept tears of love, and watered the Tree of Immortality. Now, He alone is mine.

On the way, I met two good men, who alike had gone mad after Him. I kept them over my head. Him I kept in my heart. Now, He alone is mine.

I went to the root of things, and found nothing but Him alone. The Rana sent the cup of hemlock. I drank it up, and became drunken with love for the Lord. Now, He alone is mine.

The news is abroad. Every one knows, that Mira is His bond-slave, and He is her Lord. What was destined has come to pass. Now, He alone is mine.

#### IV

God is the Helper of the helpless and the Strength of the weak. He stood by the side of the saints in their hour of trial.

So long as the Lord of Elephants trusted in his own strength he was defeated.

The moment he forgot his own strength, and in his weakness called upon the Lord, God was at hand to help him,—even before His name was half-uttered.

Draupadi, in her helplessness, called upon the Lord.

Duhshasana was worsted in his effort to unclothe her. For the Lord became her clothing.

Try, as one may, the power of asceticism, or physical or temporal might, a man is bound to fail.

Verily, the strength of the defeated, says Sudras, is the name of the Lord.

#### V

Lord, forbid it that I should cast my eyes on things that brings evil thoughts. Far better, that I were blind.

Lord forbid it that I should foul my lips with any

words stained with filth. Far better, that they were sealed.

Lord, forbid it that I should hear any word of injury to another or listen to a word of contempt. Far better, that I were deaf.

Lord, forbid it that I should look with lust on those, who should be sisters to me. Far better, that I were dead.

Lord, let Tuka flee from all this world of sense, to find eternal peace in Thee.

## VI

It is devotion to the Lord that makes the world worth living in.

Not to be found in paradise, the saints who went there covet to be born again on this earth that they may fulfil their devotion to the Lord.

God's men seek not freedom from birth and death : they ask to be born again and again, that they may serve and pray and praise and see the Lord face to face.

Blessed are the parents of him, who was born in Bharatkhand,—the land of devotion to the Lord. He has sung the praise of God. He has justified his birth.

Blessed was Brindaban, blessed the play of the Gopis, who were fortunate to live there.

They achieved such union with the Lord, that all other achievements followed. Freedom from birth and death was at their bidding.

Only the blessed ones have tasted this devotion to the Lord. Shankar knows it. Shuka, the born ascetic, knows it. Happily, the Gopis of Braja know something of it,—so sings Narsaiyan, who has tasted it.

31st October, 1924.

## AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION

BY MAHADEV DESAI

Early in the morning, after the usual reading of the *Bhagavat* was over, Bapu sent for Mr. Andrews. He came in, singing to himself a hymn. Mr. Andrews takes great delight in trying to understand correctly the hymns sung at the prayers and then selecting exactly parallel hymns from Christian authors to demonstrate the close affinity between all God's devotees on this earth. This very morning he said to me. "In the face of such conclusive proof of the essential oneness of all religions, how can anybody claim exclusive superiority of *his* own religion? The fact seems to be, that every man can find the satisfaction of the needs of his spiritual life in the religion in which he was brought up." When he came upstairs he said to Bapu "I am going to sing for you this morning a hymn, which I am sure you have never heard before. A military officer, in the Bible, goes to Christ and prays for the recovery of a servant of his, who is lying ill at home. Christ offers to go and see the patient himself. But the officer, considering himself utterly unworthy of so much special attention from the Lord, asks Him merely to express His wish that the patient should survive and he was sure that this would be enough. Such is the story that lies behind this hymn."

With this introduction, Mr. Andrews sang the hymn given below :—

I am not worthy ; cold and bare  
The lodging of my soul ;

How canst thou deign to enter there?

Lord, speak and make me whole.

"How closely it resembles the hymn of Tulsidas you are so fond of!" said Mr. Andrews, when he had finished. Bapu answered, "I have heard it before," to the agreeable surprise of Mr. Andrews. "I heard it sung in 1893" continued Bapu, "I used to meet Christians of all denominations then in South Africa and I distinctly remember having heard the hymn at the Sunday services which I used to attend." Here he recalled some of his old reminiscence connected with his Christian friends, which I need not give here. This over, Bapu said, "But I called you here for an entirely different reason. I wish you to understand properly the meaning of the Spinning Franchise."

Then there followed a lengthy talk, an account of which I give here as accurately as possible:—

Bapu: you did not like my article in the latest issue of *Young India*. But I tell you the argument is irresistible. You disapprove of my article, because you omit to take note of the concluding portion, where I make it clear that my appeal is addressed only to those who believe in voluntary spinning as an absolute necessity for the country. They should have no difficulty in accepting the condition of having to spin and contribute 2000 yards of yarn. When you say you will spin voluntarily, you should have no hesitation in readily joining an institution where the condition of membership is to ply the wheel. That is precisely why I said that in a country such as France, where extreme importance is attached to military training, it would be perfectly legitimate to lay down military training as an indispensable condition of membership in its National Assembly

If today in India we accept importance of spinning, we ought most naturally to agree to it as a condition of membership in the Congress.

Andrews: Your point is very weak. That you should make any comparison with French military training is terrible! I would rather go to jail or become an exile than join the army, even as Bertrand Russell did, or Romain Rolland, who left his country because he could not reconcile himself to fighting.

Bapu: Yes, I too would do the same. That matters little. It is but right that conscientious objectors should stand by their principles and suffer the consequences. But if the whole country in general felt the necessity of military training, why should there be any objection to giving it a place in the law of the land?

Andrews: I don't think you should take the example about military training. You ought to have chosen a better analogy. You could certainly take the instance of the Prohibition Law of the United States. It was only when about 80 per cent of the population of America showed the readiness to abandon drink that the law was enacted. There is nothing to prevent your making about 80 per cent of the Indian population spin through a separate organisation of your own and then get spinning adopted as a condition of membership in the National Assembly. As it is, you are placing the cart before the horse.

Bapu: No. I am perfectly logical. Has an organisation got the right to require its members to fulfil certain obligations, or has not? The thing may or may not appeal to the individual member, but you certainly cannot say that we have not the right to adopt it?

Andrews: In America everyone had the right to

drink before the Prohibition Law was passed. They have today the right to reintroduce drink by repealing the law. What I want to know is this: is the Congress the mouthpiece of public opinion, or of the opinion of a small body of men? Will the Congress be a National Assembly, or a small Committee?

Bapu: It will be a National Assembly. You are entitled to say that my experience is wrong. But once you concede that the Congress has the right to impose restrictions on its members, I would be able to convince you easily of the rest.

Andrews: You must not make of the Congress a party organisation. It should be a voluntary elective body of the Nation.

Bapu: You do not quite realise what Congress is. Today it happens to be an ill-defined and disorganised institution. There is much more in it than is apparent from its constitution. If the Congress is to be a truly democratic organisation, its constitution must be more dynamic, more honest. It must more truly fulfil the requirements of the nation. We don't need numbers. When I secured the acceptance of the four anna franchise, I had hoped that the Congress would become a mighty assembly, but workers were lacking. Our country today is a country of idlers and dreamers. I refer, not to the dumb millions, who are groaning under poverty and slavery, but to ourselves—the so-called intelligentsia, the talkers. How can I engage all these in some kind of national work except through the spinning wheel? In what other manner could the Congress be made a practical organisation. My hope is that this will come about by the 2000 yards a month spinning idea. As matters stand at present, we have nothing like

concerted effort at all. One says, 'I shall wield the axe, another wants to sew, yet another would like to devote himself to something else dear to him. This leads to nowhere. I aim at concentrating all the energy and effort on one thing and obtaining substantial results.

Andrews : I am afraid you are going to establish a new kind of religion, with spinning and wearing khaddar as its essential factor. Why should I be specially concerned with whether so and so wears khaddar or foreign-made cloth ? All I principally care to know is what the man is morally worth. Christ wanted us in judging a person to be guided by his heart and not by his outward appearance.

Bapu : There is a difference between Christian and Hindu ideals.

Andrews : You might as well say that if I ate a particular diet I would gain spiritually. I simply cannot understand that. Take such a saint as the late Bishop Westcott of Durham. He took meat; but it does not follow therefore that he was unspiritual.

Bapu : Hard cases make bad law. You cannot preach to the generality of people asking them to eat what they like, and yet continue to believe that they are pure.

Andrews : But I will come to the original objection. Are we sincerely making serious attempts to prepare the ground, as they did in America before prohibiting drink by law ?

Bapu : I am ever preparing the ground. We are today what we are because of four years' strenuous work. The Congress long ago accepted the importance of spinning. Moreover, the conditions in the two countries are different. America was a 'wet' country. There, the

people had to be weaned from drinking. They had to do something they never did before. Here, all that is wanted is that the people should revert to an art, which was theirs for ages, but which has been neglected for some time past. That is all. Furthermore, here he quoted a *sloka* from the *Gita* which literally translated means. "No sincere effort is wanted and there is no ban against sincere effort. The least performance of this duty saves you from calamities."

Andrews: Why do you say so? There is waste in it. We are all fitted for different kinds of work. We may be so preoccupied with other work as not to find even half an hour's time for spinning. I notice Mahadev sitting up even at midnight to do his spinning. I also saw Maulana Mahomed Ali busy spinning even at midnight during the conference and then I wonder to what purpose all this could be.

Bapu: That these friends have to do their spinning at midnight merely suggests unmethodical habits, and want of the 'time-sense': that is all.

Andrews: Apart from the half an hour imposition, I feel that other things have been thrown into the background since you began to talk of concentration on spinning. So much energy is taken up in khaddar work that the urgent need of checking the drink and drug evils is practically overlooked.

Bapu: In recommending spinning my sole idea has been to place before the country a programme, which would easily appeal to the common mind and also be a unifying force. It excludes nothing. Picketing of liquor shops was given up because of the fear of violence, not in order to concentrate on khaddar. It is not necessary to lay so much emphasis on the other items of



the programme as on khaddar. All agree that drink should be avoided. There is nothing new in this to tell the people. There will be some who will continue to drink even though Swaraj is established. These must be tackled after Swaraj.

Andrews: Is not a strenuous movement for the abolition of the opium traffic immediately called for? The country is convinced that it is.

Bapu: I believe it.

Andrews: Are you aware that women labourers in the mills drug their babies with opium?

Bapu: Yes, but don't say that the thing has begun to eat into our vitals. Don't imagine that the country will allow it to gain more ground. As for the babies, you have the question of education of the labourers, the question of medical aid, the question of the number of hours for which women labourers should be made to work and numerous other questions connected with their protection.

Andrews: When you settled upon the threefold programme of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and khaddar, and left out the question of drink it struck me as a sad omission.

Bapu: No. I never forget it. There is really nothing new to tell the people about it.

Andrews: Rather, it has become impossible to get the people to take interest in the opium question.

Bapu: For the matter of that if you and I stopped writing about South and East Africa nobody would worry about the condition of the Indians there either. We are dealing with people who know nothing. But you must remember that work for the prevention of drink is still going on. Wherever khaddar has gained a

footing the whole process of purification has begun. You could realise this if you went to Borsad or to Ramesra or Bardoli. Temperance work and the conditions of social life in the villages mainly occupy the attention of our workers wherever a khaddar centre exists.

Andrews: But why make the wearing of khaddar and spinning a *religious* duty? Will not the people boycott those that are daring enough not to wear khaddar or to spin?

Bapu: Well, it must be a religious duty. Are you sure every Indian will occupy himself usefully in the service of the country, simply if I cease to insist on making spinning a religious duty? Yet, that does not at all mean that persons not wearing khaddar or not spinning should be boycotted. On the contrary, it would be our duty to embrace them and win them ultimately to the side of khaddar by our love, certainly not by talking or thinking ill of them. I have suffered the penance of a twenty-one days' fast simply because we fell from this standard. Will not the people still understand? True boycott can only be of one kind, that of refusal to accept personal service and denying oneself the advantages of association with the person so dealt with, while being ever ready to render him help in case of need. I would welcome that kind of boycott in the case of a person addicted to drink, but not in the case of those who don't wear khaddar. For there is certainly not that sin in wearing foreign cloth as in drink.

Andrews: You make me feel more at ease. I am glad you have cleared these points. Only, I don't like the idea of your making khaddar a test of moral fitness. A friend writes to me to say that he has given up wear-

ing khaddar because it has become a cheap method of popularity.

Bapu: The friend makes a mistake. Am I to cease doing what I think proper because another person makes a pretence of doing that thing? That would be like my giving up speaking the truth because some people feign truth.

Andrews: But can't you eliminate the expressions *shudha* and *ashudha* from the khaddar terminology!

Bapu: I should certainly use these terms in connection with cloth. Foreign cloth for an Indian to wear would be impure. I would not apply this to the case of the Indians in England, for instance; yet just as a man is not an impure being simply because he wears impure cloth, so also a person leading an impure life does not purify himself because he wears pure clothes. The economic value of what I call *shudha* cloth i.e. khaddar, is always there; that is why even a prostitute may wear pure khaddar and help to that extent to keep out foreign cloth.

Andrews: I don't see how you can call foreign-made cloth 'impure.'

Bapu: I know that. We must agree to differ there. Air gathered from the plains of Delhi would be an impure commodity to be inhaled in Simla. It is in this sense that I call foreign-made cloth *ashudha* i. e. impure.

Andrews: But I don't see that. I am, however, glad you have explained so many other things.

Before the fast, such talks were quite frequent with Gandhiji, which he engaged in with everybody. But after the fast, barring the discussions with Pandit Motilal Nehru, this was the first long discussion of an important and serious character.

*3rd, December, 1925*

## THE LATEST FAST

BY M. K. GANDHI

This the latest (seven days') fast of mine which is closing tomorrow morning could not be kept from the public in spite of my attempt to the contrary. It has brought many inquiries and some angry protests.

The public many rest perfectly at ease about my health. It is something for me to be able to write this myself on the seventh day of my fast. But by the time this is in the hands of the reader, I hope to be almost up and doing.

The alarm was felt on the fourth day when I was much exhausted with work. In my vanity, I had thought that during the comparatively brief fast I would be able to work all the full seven days. In fairness to myself I must say that much of the work I did during the three and a half days was inevitable as it was connected with the object of the fast. But as soon as I realised that I had overworked myself, I stopped all work, and on the last day I am stronger than on the fourth.

But the public will have to neglect my fasts and cease to worry about them. They are a part of my being. I can as well do without my eyes, for instance, as I can without fasts. What the eyes are for outer world, fasts are for the inner. And much as I should like the latest fast to be the very last in my life, something within me tells me that I might have to go through many such ordeals and, who knows, much more trying. I may be wholly wrong. Then the world will

'be able to write an epitaph 'over my ashes : ' Well deserved thou fool.' But for the time being my error, if it be one, must sustain me. Is it not better that I satisfy my conscience though misguided, because not perfectly pure, than that I should listen to every voice, be it ever so friendly but by no means infallible? If I had a *guru*,—and I am looking for one,—I should surrender myself body and soul to him. But in this age of unbelief a true *guru* is hard to find. A substitute will be worse than useless, often positively harmful. I must therefore warn all against accepting imperfect ones as *gurus*. It is better to grope in the dark and wade through a million errors to Truth than to entrust oneself to one who "knows not that he knows not." Has a man ever learnt swimming by tying a stone to his neck?

And who shall lose by erroneous fasting? Of course only myself. But I am public property, it is said. So be it. But I must be taken with all my faults. I am a searcher after truth. My experiments I hold to be infinitely more important than the best-equipped Himalayan expeditions. And the results? If the search is scientific, surely there is no comparison between the two. Let me therefore go my way. I shall lose my usefulness the moment I stifle the still small voice within.

Well, this fast has nothing to do with the public. I am conducting a big institution called the Satyagrah-ashram. Trusting friends have given me already over two lacs of rupees for land and building alone. They are paying for its annual upkeep not less than eighteen thousand rupees per year. They do so in the hope that I am building up character. There are grown up men and women in the Ashram. There are boys and girls.

The latter are trained to remain unmarried as long as possible. At no place within my knowledge do women and girls enjoy so much freedom as at the Ashram. It is my best and only creation. The world will judge me by its results. No man or woman, no boy or girl can live there, if I do not want them. I believe that it contains some of the purest character we have in India. If I am to deserve the implicit trust of friends who support it, I must be doubly vigilant, since they will neither examine the accounts, nor the activity of the Ashram. I discovered errors among the boys and somewhat among the girls. I know that hardly a school or any other institution is free from the errors I am referring to. I am anxious to see the Ashram free from errors which are sapping the manhood of the nation and undermining the character of the youth. It was not permissible to punish the boys. Experience gained in two schools under my control has taught me that punishment does not purify, if anything it hardens children. In such cases in South Africa I have resorted to fasts with, in my opinion, the best of results. I have resorted to the same process here and let me say of a milder type. The basis of the action is mutual love. I know that I possess the love of the boys and the girls. I know too that if the giving up of my life can make them spotless, it would be my supreme joy to give it. Therefore I could do no less to bring the youngsters to a sense of their error. So far the results seem to be promising.

What, however, if I cannot perceive fruit? I can but do the will of God as I feel it. The result is in His disposing. This suffering for things great and small is the keynote of Satyagraha.

But why should not the teachers perform the

penance? They cannot, so long as I remain the chief. If they had fasted with me all work would have come to a standstill. As with big institutions so with small ones. As the king must share the sins of his subjects even as he arrogates to himself all their virtues, so must I, a tiny chosen king in the little Ashram, atone for the sins of the least among the children of the Ashram, if I may proudly claim the presence in it of many noble characters. If I am to identify myself with the grief of the least in India, aye; if I have the power, the least in the world, let me identify myself with the sins of the little ones who are under my care. And so doing in all humility I hope some day to see God—Truth—face to face.

—30-11-25.

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*10th December, 1925*

## THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

BY M. K. GANDHI

Friends who are interested in my health will be glad to learn that, if I lost nine pounds during the seven days' fast, I have regained up to the seventh day after the breaking of the fast over six pounds in weight. I am even able to take moderate exercise and go through a fair amount of work everyday. By the time this is out, I shall find myself in Wardha where I propose to take as much rest as possible up to the time of the meeting of the Congress. May I, therefore, ask C. P. and other friends not to regard me as being in Wardha on business? It will tax all my energy to attend to my weekly editing and daily correspondence. I hope to regain much of the lost strength by the time I reach Cawnpore.

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10th December, 1925

## THE LESSON OF THE FAST

BY MAHADEVA DESAI

In his article last week on 'The latest fast' Gandhiji has explained the genesis of the fast. It was important alike for the boys for whose benefit it was undertaken as for the *silent* world and equally important for those in charge of the education of the young. I shall summarise the lesson in Gandhiji's own words.

Before breaking his fast on the morning of the 1st December he gathered the boys to his bedside and delivered the following message in slow, moving, accents:

"Think of last Tuesday, when I began my fast. Why did I take that step? There were three ways open to me:

(1) *Punishment*. I could have followed the easy road of corporal punishment. Usually a teacher on detecting errors on the part of pupils would flatter himself with having done a good thing if he punished them. I have been a teacher, myself, though my preoccupations prevent me from teaching you during these days. As a teacher I had no option but to reject this accepted method for I know by experience it is futile and even harmful. (2) *Indifference*. I could have left you to your fate. Not unoften does a teacher do so. 'It is enough' he argues, 'that the boys do their lessons tolerably well and reproduce what they are taught. Surely, I am not concerned with their private behaviour. And even if I was how am I to keep watch over them?' This indifference could not appeal to me. (3) The third was the method of *Love*. Your character is to me a sacred trust. I must therefore try to enter into your lives, your inner-



most thoughts, your desires and your impulses, and help you to detect and eradicate purities if any. For inward cleanliness is the first thing that should be taught, other things must follow after the first and most important lesson has gone home. I discovered irregularities amongst you. What was I to do? Punishing you was out of the question. Being the chief among the teachers, I had to take the punishment on myself in the form of the fast which breaks today.

"I have learnt a lot during these days of quite thinking. What have you? Could you assure me that you will never repeat your mistake? You may err again but this fast will be lost on you if you do not realise the way out of it. Truthfulness is the master-key. Do not lie under any circumstances whatsoever. Keep nothing secret, take your teachers and your elders into your confidence and make a clean breast of every thing to them. Bear ill-will to none, do not say an evil thing of any one behind his back, above all 'to thine own-self be true', so that you are false to no one else. Truthful dealing even in the least little things of life is the only secret of a pure life.

"You must have noticed that I receive my inspiration on such occasions from the hymn '*Vaishnava Jan to tene kahiye*' (He is the true Vaishnava etc.) That hymn is enough to sustain me, even if I were to forget the Bhagawad Gita. To tell you the truth, however, there is one thing which is even simpler, but which may possibly be difficult for you to understand. But that has been my pole star all along during life's journey—the conviction that Truth is God and untruth a denial of Him.'

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*17th December, 1925*

THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF FASTING

BY M. K. GANDHI

A medical friend who believes in fasting cure under certain circumstances invites me to reduce to writing the physical effects of fasting as I might have observed them. As they are not inconsiderable and as I know many cases in which people who fasted have done themselves harm, I gladly comply with the medical friend's request. Though almost all my fasts have been undertaken for a moral purpose, being an inveterate diet reformer and a believer in fasting as a cure for many obstinate diseases, I have not failed to note their physical effects. I must, however, confess that I have not made any accurate observations for the simple reason that it was not possible for me to combine the two. I was much too pre-occupied with the moral values to note or mind the physical. I can therefore only give the general impressions. For accurate observations I can only refer the reader to Dr. Ansari and Abdur Rahman who were my medical guides throughout the long fast of last year. They were most painstaking. They were constantly by my bed-side and had thrown themselves heart and soul into the work of looking after me.

Let me at the outset note a disaster that befell me after the second long fast, that is, of fourteen days, in South Africa in 1914. Almost on the second day of the breaking of the fast I began strenuous walking, feeling that I should come to no harm. I walked nearly three miles, the second or the third day, and suffered excru-

ciating pains in the muscle-less calves. Not knowing the cause I persisted in walking as soon as the pain subsided. It was in this condition that I left South Africa for England and came under the observation of Dr. Jivraj Mehta, who warned me that if I persisted I might be a cripple for life and that I must lie in bed for at least a fortnight. But the warning was too late to keep my general health, which used to be excellent such that I was capable of taking a forty mile march without being over-fatigued. Twenty miles in a day was nothing for me in those days. It was as a result of the strain I ignorantly put upon my body that I had to suffer from a violent attack of pleurisy which permanently injured a constitution that was fairly sound. It was the first serious attack of any disease in my life. From this very costly experiment I learned that perfect physical rest during fast and for a time proportionate to the length of the fast, after the breaking of it, is a necessity, and if this simple rule can be observed no evil effect of fasting need be feared. Indeed, it is my conviction that the body gains by a well-regulated fast. For during fasting the body gets rid of many of its impurities. During the last year's fast, as during this year, but unlike the previous fast, I took water with salt and bi-carbonate of soda added to it. Somehow or other I develop during fasts a distaste for water. With the addition of salt and soda it becomes somewhat bearable. I found that drinking copious draughts of water kept the system clean and the mouth moist. To every six to eight ounces of water five grains of salt and an equal quantity of soda were added, and I drank during the day from forty to forty-eight ounces of water, in six to eight doses. I took also regularly every day an enema

containing nearly three quarters of a pint of water with nearly forty grains of salt and nearly an equal quantity of soda dissolved in it. The water was always warm. I had also a sponge bath every day given to me in bed. I had both during last year's and this year's fast refreshing sleep at night and at least an hour during the day time. For three days and a half during the last fast, I worked practically from 4 o'clock in the morning till 8 o'clock in the evening, holding discussions on the question that had entailed the fast, and attending to my correspondence and editing. On the fourth day I developed a violent headache and the strain was proving unbearable. In the afternoon of the fourth day I stopped all work. The following day I felt recuperated, the feeling of exhaustion was gone, head-ache had almost subsided. On the sixth day, I felt fresher still and on the seventh day which was also my silent day I felt so fresh and strong that I was able to write with a steady hand my article on the fast.

I am not aware during the whole of the fast of having suffered any pangs of hunger. Indeed on the day of breaking the fast I was in no hurry, I broke it half an hour later than I need have. There was no difficulty during the fast about spinning. I was able to sit up every day for over half an hour with a pillow to support the back, and spin almost with my usual speed. Nor did I have to miss any of the three daily prayer-meetings. During the last four days I had to be carried on a cot to these meetings. With an effort I could even have sat up at the meetings, but I thought it better to conserve my energy. I am not conscious of having suffered much physical pain. The only pain which the memory has stored is a feeling of nausea, creeping over me now

and then, which was as a rule overcome by sipping water.

I broke the fast on orange-juice and grape-juice, about six ounces altogether, and I sucked the pulp of an orange. I repeated the performance two hours after, adding ten grapes, which too were slowly sucked, leaving out all the skin. Later in the day and after the enema, I had six ounces of goat's milk with two ounces of water, followed by an orange and ten grapes. The milk and water were boiled. I had the same quantity of milk and water again in the evening, and fruit. The next day the quantity of milk was raised to eighteen ounces, water always added, and thus I continued to increase the quantity of milk by six ounces every day, till I reached forty-eight ounces. Milk is still diluted with water, though now one ounce of water is added to each portion. For one day and a half I tried undiluted milk, but I noticed a certain heaviness, which I attribute to undiluted milk and have therefore gone back to diluting it.

At the time of writing these notes it is the twelfth day after the breaking of the fast. I have not yet taken any solid food. Part of the fruit is still turned into juice and during the past three days I have added to grapes and oranges either papaw or pomegranate and *chiku*. The largest quantity of milk I have taken is sixty-four ounces. The average is forty-eight. I add at times baker's bread or home-made light *chapati*. But for months together I have been living simply on milk and fruit and keeping myself in a fit condition.

My highest weight since my discharge from prison has been 112 lbs. The weight lost during the seven days of fast was 9 lbs. I have now regained the whole

of that weight and am now weighing a little over 103 lbs. For the last three days, I have taken regular exercise, both in the morning and evening, without the slightest fatigue. There is no difficulty in walking on level ground. There is still some strain felt in ascending or descending steps. The bowels move fairly regularly, and I sleep almost to order.

My own opinion is that I have lost physically nothing as a result either of the twenty one days' fast or this the latest seven days' fast. The loss of weight during the seven days was no doubt somewhat alarming, but it was clearly due to the severe strain that was put upon the constitution during the first three and a half days. A little more rest, and I should regain my original vitality with which I started the fast and probably regain without difficulty the weight and strength lost in Cutch.

From a layman's and from a purely physical standpoint I should lay down the following rules for all those who may wish to fast on any account whatsoever.

1. Conserve your energy both physical and mental from the very beginning.

2. You must cease to think of food whilst you are fasting.

3. Drink as much cold water as you can, with or without soda and salt, but in small quantities at a time (water should be boiled, strained and cooled). Do not be afraid of salt and soda, because most waters contain both these salts in a free state.

4. Have a warm sponge daily.

5. Take an enema regularly during fast. You will be surprised at the impurities you will expel daily.

6. Sleep as much as possible in the open air.

7. Bathe in the morning sun. A sun and air bath is at least as great a purifier as a water bath.

8. Think of anything else but the fast.

9. No matter from what motive you are fasting, during this precious time, think of your Maker, and of your relation to Him and His other creation, and you will make discoveries you may not have even dreamed of.

With apologies to medical friends, but out of the fulness of my own experience and that of fellow-cranks I say without hesitation, fast (1) if you are constipated, (2) if you are anaemic, (3) if you are feverish, (4) if you have indigestion, (5) if you have a head-ache, (6) if you are rheumatic, (7) if you are gouty, (8) if you are fretting and foaming, (9) if you are depressed, (10) if you are over-joyed; and you will avoid medical prescriptions and patent medicines.

Eat *only* when you are *hungry* and when you have laboured for your food.

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*17th December, 1925*

AFTER THE FAST

BY MAHADEV DESAI

It will be remembered that the first public function that Gandhiji attended after the breaking of the latest fast was the Gujarat Vidyapith Convocation on the fifth instant. There was another function on the same day—the Vidyalaya Social—where also he presided. Nothing could be quieter than these functions, and speeches which were shortness itself were read by deputy.

The message of the first speech could be summed up in these lines :

‘If in the trough of the enormous sea,  
Thou canst not find the sky for spray,  
Fear never, for thy Sun is there with thee,  
By night and day.’

Find that of the second in the last words of the speech itself: ‘Remember that God is described as the Holder of the threads of the Universe. There is a world of meaning in that pregnant description. Would you not draw the thread in his name and for the poor of your land?’

The next day was an engagement we had all dreaded and tried our best to dissuade Gandhiji from accepting. It was the visit to Dholka. True, it was long overdue. But a visit to a place like that, it was feared, could hardly be peaceful, for the crowds from villages would be more than the nerves could bear. But *that* engagement could not be cancelled, maintained Gandhiji. ‘I must face it all, if only to satisfy that quiet worker Dahyabahi whom I have been giving promises all these months,’ he said. And we obeyed, and found that it was right that we did so.

The arrangements left nothing to be desired. There was no noisy crowd, but a peaceful gathering, standing in an orderly fashion, at the station, no noise or shouts, and no procession. Men and women came in to see Gandhiji, and went away, without the slightest hubbub. There was a women’s meeting where there was not much Khaddar in evidence, but commendable quiet for a big gathering like that. After the brief speech, which had to be repeated sentence by sentence, the good women came one by one and presented their mites for



the Deshabandhu Memorial Fund. The public meeting in the evening was also equally quiet. Representatives from neighbouring villages presented their little purses and a substantial purse (substantial for Dholka) on behalf of the place proper was also presented. The proceedings commenced with *Rama-dhun* (repeating of *Rama-nama*) led by the blind poet Hansraj and after the presentation of the address and the purses a short message from Gandhiji was read out to the meeting. It could be summed up in a few sentences: I am thankful that inspite of my physical inability, God has enabled me to keep my promise to pay you a visit. I hear that there are many Talukdars here. I hope they will cultivate and maintain sweet relations with their tenants. I am told there is no Hindu-Muslim tension here. Let the relations be more friendly than they are. How am I to convince you that spinning and exclusive use of Khaddar is the swiftest way to swaraj? A yard of Khaddar used by you means four or five annas in the pockets of your poor countrymen. I wish I could also carry home to you my conviction that to regard any human being as 'untouchable' is to insult one self and one's religion. It is the evil passions in us that are untouchable and let us be rid of them. Purify yourselves and spin half an hour daily as a sacrifice, if you think spinning need not add to your income. Spin in the name of God and spin for the poor of your land.'

There was no argument, no hard word, not even the language of persuasion. Not that he could not have dictated a longer speech, or an appeal of the usual type, but he did not think it worthwhile. The simple brevity was more eloquent than a passionate appeal. 'I have given my message. You cannot have a new or fresh

message from me. Carry out that message and let me know the results'—that is the general message he would like to address to all.

There was similar function at Bombay. The teachers of the National Anglo-Gujarati School are struggling against tremendous odds; to keep the school going they voluntarily agreed to a reduction of Rs. 15 monthly from their already slender salaries. The Principal takes no salary at all. The dramatic performances arranged did credit both to the teachers and the pupils. The dialogues—selected or prepared *ad hoc*—were all good, and there was no jar, except that created by the foreign dresses of the actors in the performances. Gandhiji made here even a briefer speech than elsewhere. He could have appealed to the people for funds, appealed to them to maintain the school at all costs. But no. He simply referred to the sacrifice of the teachers and suggested to them to discard foreign dresses in future. For he knew that the teachers are in earnest, and prepared to maintain the school at all sacrifices. To the parents there was no new message to give. Enough if they knew that over and above their obvious interest in the education of their boys and their duty not to go back on a forward step they took four years ago, they owed something to these self-sacrificing teachers.

And two considerations arise out of these quiet functions. The most obvious one is that when necessity arises, and when we appreciate the necessity, we can maintain enough order and quiet. Why should not we maintain that order and quiet on all occasions—not only when Gandhiji or any other public leader is weak or ailing, but even when they are in the best of health? The consideration which is not so obvious but no less

important is, need we trouble Gandhiji to undertake his tours any more? Could we not work away quietly for a half year or even a year, report our progress regularly through our leaders or representatives, send them to Sabarmati if necessary for consultations, and only at the end of a serious effort at the fulfilment of the programme, invite Gandhiji to see the result of the effort and make suggestions, if any?

### THE UNITY CONFERENCE.

In consequence of Hindu Muslim riots in various parts of the country culminating in what is known as the Kohat Tragedy, of which some details are given elsewhere the attention of the leaders was concentrated on the problem of Unity. Prof. Rushbrook Williams thus describes the origin and the proceedings of the Unity Conference held at Delhi in his book *India-in 1924-25* :

Mr. Gandhi gave a lead to the country by declaring that on September 18th he would begin a fast of three weeks, in penance for the responsibility which he himself acknowledged for the manner in which his campaign had fomented bitter feelings. From several quarters came the suggestion that a Unity Conference should be summoned to focus all sections of opinion upon the evil of communal disturbances. This conference ultimately met in Delhi on September

26th, and was attended by Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsees, Sikhs and Christians. A considerable number of Englishmen were present including, among others the Metropolitan of India. The difficulties to be encountered were enormous. Communal tension was, as already stated, acute; and there was a general disposition on the part of important sections of opinion to insist upon their rights regardless of consequences. Even among those political leaders who were pledged to promote unity between the two communities, dissensions shortly manifested themselves; and only at the cost of infinite patience and labour were a series of resolutions drafted and accepted, laying down the basis upon which the problem of communal dissensions might be approached. These resolutions proclaimed it to be improper for any person who considered his religious feelings affronted take the law into his own hands. All differences should be referred to arbitration and failing that, to the courts. The universal toleration of religious beliefs, and freedom of expression and practice, with due regard to the feelings of others, was proclaimed. Upon the crucial question of cow-killing a resolution was passed admonishing the Hindus of the impossibility of stopping the practice by force alone. Muhammadans were advised to exercise their rights with as little offence to the Hindus as possible; while the Mussalman leaders of the Conference personally pledged themselves to do everything in their power to reduce the number of cows annually slaughtered. Other resolutions discouraged the practice of disturbing rival communities by music, calling to prayer and the like without regard to conflicting susceptibilities. The Conference also established an All-India Panchayat of 15 persons, including Christians and Sikhs as well as Hindus and Muhammadans, whose task it was to appoint local Panchayats for the purpose of conciliation between two communities. Unfortunately, the Unity Conference has produced little practical result and the All-India Panchayat seems still born. This, however, regrettable, is hardly surprising. The atmosphere amidst which the deliberations were conducted was ill suited to any clear-cut remedy for the Hindu-Mussalman problem. It seems difficult, however, to deny that the solution of this vexed question must ultimately lie along the lines laid down at the Delhi Conference.

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## THE 'UNITY' CONFERENCE AT DELHI

A collection of views about the Conference published in *Young India* are given below :

9th October, 1924

## WHERE IT WAS WANTING

BY MAHADEO DESAI

'Repent! Repent! Though ye have gone  
Through paths of wickedness and woe;  
And though your sins be red as scarlet  
They shall be white as snow.'

It is not easy to speak about the deliberations and the results of the Unity Conference. It may be admitted at once that it did not meet in vain, though some of the resolutions, especially the one which was regarded as the main resolution, namely number 4, do not strike one as conceded from the heart, and smack of the treaty-terms wrested by one party from another, yet the sure achievement of the conference consists in the unanimous acceptance of resolutions 2 and 3—the one ruling out Force absolutely as a remedy for communal strife; the other proposing the formation of a National Panchayat. If every member of the Conference tries by every means in his power to follow this resolution ruling out Force, the object of the Conference might be achieved.

Two more facts may be noted. It must be said to the credit of the Conference, that it had done nothing under the pressure of the fast. The fact that the long and weary discussions fructified into resolutions, which, however inadequate, satisfied all parties, *does* indicate a desire for Unity, which has replaced the former distrust of Unity, the want of faith, both in the possibility and the efficacy of Unity.

For this result, the Conference is mainly indebted to the efforts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Swami Shraddhanadji. It may be said without fear of contradiction, that without Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the second and to my mind the most important resolution might not have been passed in its present

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form; that without Swami Shraddhandji's and Pandit Malaviyaji's readiness "to agree with thine adversary quickly" no resolution would have been passed; that a less patient and tactful President might easily have got sick of the whole business and dissolved the Conference in bitter impatience.

More than this, I am afraid, cannot be said. The Conference was an indication of the desire for Unity, but not of the will for it. The will can only come out of a "broken and contrite heart" which "the Lord will not despise."

I am afraid the whole significance of the fast was, in a way, lost upon the Conference. It was not undertaken to get the two communities to meet and frame a set of resolutions; it was not undertaken with a view to get promises of better relations. It was taken mainly as a penance. It was truly the outcome of "a broken and contrite heart." In so far as it was meant to be a prayer, it was meant to evoke the spirit of true repentance in everyone's heart. For everyone of us had sadly betrayed the cause.

Was the Conference an expression of true repentance? Gandhiji *did* want us to do penance, not by fasting, but by "retracing our steps."

"Sacrifice and meat-offering Thou desirest not ;

Else would I give it Thee.

A broken and contrite heart, O Lord,

Thou wilt not despise."

Have we retraced our steps? Most of the resolutions passed and those also proposed, but wisely ruled out by the President, were more in the nature of demands for the reduction of armaments than for the stoppage of all war. There is no doubt repentance in the first part of the second resolution, which was supported most ably and movingly by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. There was unquestionably the sacred flame of repentance in the words of Maulana Shaukat Ali when he addressed the house at the close. But the spirit of repentance did not seem to me to pervade the atmosphere. No one will argue that nothing had happened for which we need repent. Sacred person and property had been violated; sacred shrines had been desecrated; hearts, more sacred than shrines and truer houses of God, had been broken. A cry ought to have gone out, the echoes of which should have reverberated from every nook and corner of the land. That lacerated soul's outcry was wanting.

Because it was wanting, there was also lacking the courage of

conviction, which counts no cast; which stands out only against kith and kin, but against the whole world. With that courage comes the will for union, for heartunity, the true will for Swaraj.

But the sacred flame is still burning from which we may yet catch a spark.

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### BENEATH THE RIDGE

BY C. F. ANDREWS

At the foot of the Ridge at Delhi, on the farther side away from the city, is a house called Dil Khush, where Mahatma Gandhi has been keeping his fast. Above the house, stands out the historic Ridge itself with its immemorial ruins telling of battles in days gone by.

From the terrace on the upper storey there can be seen ruined buttresses and walls, and not far away from them Asoka's Pillar points its finger to the sky. Further on, a 'Mutiny Memorial' disfigures the landscape with its ugly proportions. In the darkness of the night, these landmarks stand out in the star-light and against the Moon. Between the Ridge top and Dil Khush are the golf-links where lines of motor cars, in the Delhi season, block the road each afternoon, while the golfers play their round of golf.

Mahatma Gandhi had called me to the terrace on the upper storey one afternoon. Some musicians had come, and he wished me to hear to music. It was one of his worst days; his weakness was extreme. A boy was singing softly at the far end of the terrace. As I passed Mahatmajī in order to sit down and listen to the music, I could not but take note how drawn his face was with pain. The sight renewed my anxiety, and at first I hardly listened to the music. The Sun was setting in the west, and shafts of light were pouring from it, piercing the open glades where the golfers were playing. The rocks and ruins on the hill-top were flushed with crimson and gold.

The beauty at last arrested me and soothed my inner fears; and then I saw a vision. There seemed to come before my imagination the whole story of the past. That Pillar, with its edict of toleration and non-violence, brought to my mind the Buddhist Age and the saintly King Asoka. The people of the land were kindly and tolerant towards man and beast alike. It was a golden age of peace.

But those fortress ruins, and that Mutiny Memorial told me of

another chapter in human history, filled with bloodshed and bitter strife. On that evening, the sun was setting peacefully in the west; but all through the previous night the Ridge had been lashed by rain and tempest, and the winds had fiercely raged. The thunder had rolled along its sides and echoed in its rocks and hollows, and the jagged lightning had played against its summit. Even so, in Indian history, the calm beauty of those peaceful days of King Asoka had been followed by the storm-swept days of war. Last of all, in the Mutiny, the Ridge had been stained with human blood and scarred by shot and shell.

Below the summit of the Ridge, in the open spaces where the modern golf links had been made, I watched the golfers come and go. The clubs were swung and the balls were hit; muscular men and women marched forward, while little boys carried their golf clubs behind. Muscularity was there in every limb—muscularity and temporal power.

Instinctively my gaze turned back to the frail, wasted, tortured spirit on the terrace by my side, bearing the sins and sorrows of the people. With a rush of emotion, there came to memory the passage from the Book of Lamentations,—“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow.” And in that hour of vision, I knew more deeply, in my own personal life, the meaning of the Cross.

### THE EDITION OF TOLERATION

BY C. F. ANDREWS

It is a strangely moving thought that very near at hand to the place of Conference, and close to the place where Mahatma Gandhi has been lying, are two pillars of King Asoka. On both of them is inscribed the Sixth Edict, which reads as follows :—

“I devote my attention to all religious communities alike; for all denominations are revered by me with various forms of reverence. Nevertheless, personal adherence to one's own religion is the chief thing, in my opinion.”

The Twelfth Rock Edict concerning Religious Toleration is the most famous of all. I quote the following passage:—

“His Sacred Majesty cares not so much for external religious observance as that there should be a growth of the true spirit of religion in all sects. The growth of the true spirit of religion assumes various forms, but the root of it is restraint of speech, namely, that



a man should not irrationally revere his own sect, or disparage that of another. Depreciation should be for a specific reason only, because the sects of other people all deserve respect for one reason or another.

"By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of others. But by acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect and does disservice to the sects of others. For he who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging the sects of others, merely from attachment to his own sect, and with the intention of exalting his own sect, he in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect.

"Wherefore, the adherents of all sects must be informed that His Sacred Majesty cares not so much for gifts or external religious observance as that there should be a growth of the true spirit of religion and respect for all."

This great Rock Edict of Toleration is found at a spot about forty miles distant from Peshawar on the North-West Frontier, about a thousand miles from Asoka's capital. The second and most perfect copy is near to Dehra Dun. A third copy is in Kathiawar. A fourth is near the coast of the Bay of Bengal in Orissa. The southern version is found in the Ganjam District of Madras.

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*2nd October, 1924*

The following resolution was carried unanimously at the 'Unity' Conference, being proposed by the Chairman:—

This Conference places on record its deep grief and concern at the fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undertaken.

The Conference is emphatically of opinion that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential, and condemns any desecration of places of worship, to whatsoever faith they may belong, and any persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith; and further condemns any attempts by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to secure or enforce one's own religious observances at the cost of the rights of others.

The members of the Conference assure Mahatma Gandhi and pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce these principles and to condemn any deviation from them even under provocation.

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This Conference further authorises the President to convey personally to Mahatma Gandhi the solemn assurance of this Conference to the above effect as also the united wishes of this Conference that Mahatma Gandhi should immediately break his fast in order to permit the Conference to have the benefit of his cooperation, advice and guidance in deciding upon the speediest means of effectively checking the evil which is fast over-spreading the country.

Sept. 26-1924 (Sd.) MOTILAL NEHRU, *CHAIRMAN*.

The following reply was given from his bed-side in writing by Mahatma Gandhi:—

Dear Motilalji.

Moved by affection and pity the Conference guided by you has passed the resolution you kindly read to me last night. I would ask you to assure the meeting that if I could have complied with its wishes I would gladly have done so. But I have examined and re-examined myself and I find it is not possible for me to recall the fast. My religion teaches me that a promise once made or a vow once taken for a worthy object may not be broken. And you know my life has been regulated on that basis for now more than 40 years.

The causes of the fast are much deeper than I can explain in this note. For one thing I am expressing my faith through this fast. Non-cooperation was not conceived in hatred or ill-will towards a single Englishman. Its non-violent character was intended to conquer Englishmen by our love. Not only has it not resulted in that consequence, but the energy generated by it has brought about hatred and ill-will against one another amongst ourselves. It is the knowledge of this fact which has weighed me down and imposed this irrevocable penance upon me.

The fast is therefore a matter between God and myself, and I would therefore not only ask you to forgive me for not breaking it but would ask you even to encourage me and pray for me that it may end successfully.

I have not taken up the fast to die, but I have taken it up to live a better and purer life for the service of the country. If, therefore, I reach a crisis (of which humanly speaking I see no possibility whatever) when the choice lies between death and food, I shall certainly break the fast. But Drs. Ansari and Abdul Rahman, who are looking after me with the greatest attention and care, will tell you that I am keeping wonderfully fresh.

I would therefore respectfully urge the meeting to transmute all personal affection of which the resolution is an index into solid, earnest and true work for unity\* for which the Conference has met.

27-9-24

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

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*9th October, 1924*

### THE METROPOLITAN'S CONTRIBUTION

The Bishop of Calcutta made a valuable contribution by his statement to the Press that the results of the Conference could only penetrate to the masses by means of constant teaching given by those who have influence among them. "The new spirit," he added, "must permeate downwards. Obviously it will take time, but one can hope that the process has commenced." In a very concise phrase he stated also the truth concerning religious propaganda. "There is really nothing wrong," he said, "in preaching what is contrary to the faith of another, but only in expressing it in an offensive way." But far greater than any verbal contribution were the simplicity and humility and active sympathy which he showed throughout.

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### Pt. GOKARAN NATH MISRA

"As a Liberal I must express my great satisfaction at the unique and signal success of the Conference. When I received the telegraphic invitation to join it, I at once made up my mind to do so, because the spirit that had prevailed in the past in the country was a great bar to our attaining Swaraj, and also because I considered it my first duty to do everything to promote unity between

\* Mahatma Gandhi adds in a note in *Young India* of 16th October 1924: My fast and the Unity Conference notwithstanding, riots have taken place in Allahabad and Jubbulpur. No one expected that all riots will end as if by magic because of the Conference or the fast. But I do expect that the Press will write of such riots with restraint and without bias. I do hope, too, that the leaders of both the communities and belonging to all parties will co-operate to find out the causes and deal with them and issue to the public a correct version.

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the various communities and thereby render you satisfaction and consolation at a time when you had taken a great vow for our sake. Personally, I at once gave up all other engagements and I have worked quietly at Delhi for a full week in order to help to achieve the object which we all had in view. It is a matter of great thankfulness to me that success has come at last. By your blessing, a great and strong stone has been laid in the foundation of the structure of Hindu Muslim Unity.

"The resolutions passed, though they may not give entire satisfaction to those who wanted to get all that they desired are yet on the whole satisfactory. They at least afford us a good working basis. Much of the success of the Conference is due to the ability, patience, tact and firmness of Pandit Motilal Nehru whom we had elected as our President.

"I now appeal to you to bring about a similar unity on the political platform. Many of us feel that unless all parties join hands and demand Swaraj with a united voice from one platform, it will be difficult to attain the goal for which we are all so passionately striving and all intend to achieve. It is needless for me to point out the extreme necessity of such a political union at this present juncture. Let us all sink our differences, and invent a formula which might be acceptable to all. Let us close our ranks and fight the constitutional battle, which lies before us, with resolution and courage, so as to win the field."

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### AN IMPRESSION OF THE CONFERENCE

BY H. C. E. ZACHARIAS

Coming up last week to attend the now historical 'Unity Conference' at Delhi, there was perhaps one thing more than any other that forced itself at first upon an observer's mind, and that was the little enthusiasm one seemed to encounter, whether in the country in general, or amongst those bidden to take part. I, for one, certainly had the impression that nobody seemed very sanguine about the Conference turning out a success in any sense of the word, or anticipated that any 'Unity' would result. Hopes had been falsified too often by facile expectations. Exasperation at communal unreasonableness had grown too strong for that.

Probably the ultimate success of the Conference owes not a little

to that temper. There had been enough flare of trumpets, too much evanescent emotionalism in the past. To get out of the *impasse*, the first condition was for everybody to realise how deeply the cart had got into the mud, and that mere shouting and flogging a spent horse were of no use at all. To change the metaphor: I think that most people at the Conference realised, as the proceedings moved on, that they were brought up against a stone wall. There was simply no further progress possible in that fatal direction.

So, with their backs to the wall, the leaders great and little, found themselves at last forced to come to an agreement. Therefore, as resolution after resolution was minutely discussed and amended, one thing again and again happened. The party that held out for a point dear to it found in the end, when all arguments had been exhausted, that they had to choose between two alternatives. They might either carry their point, or else secure a possible *modus vivendi* between the two great Indian communities.

The crucial question of cow-killing was typical. The resolution, as drafted, provided that 'Hindus must not expect the exercise of the right of cow-killing to be stopped by force' (whether physical or legislative) 'but only by mutual consent.' Then the Hindus said, 'If we, Hindus, give away so much you, Muslims, must agree to a further clause guaranteeing that no cows will be killed in any place, where they are not killed now, and that you will gradually reduce all cow-killing, until the practice is completely stopped.'

But the Mussalmans could not do this,—or perhaps one should say the leaders present feared that they might hardly get their people to do it. Even a magnificent appeal on the part of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad seemed at first unable to move some of his friends. But they fully realised what was at stake and that once more every one was beating his head against the wall.

The President gave fifteen minutes for any wording to be drawn up that could be conscientiously agreed to. A feverish quarter of an hour having passed, Mufti Kifayat Ullah, as spokesman, got up and declared that they on their part agreed to the clause that the *status quo* should be maintained. The fact was, there was simply no alternative except the continuation of all the bitter struggle of the past.

A great feeling of relief greeted the announcement. But there followed the clause "Muslims to do everything in their power to reduce cow slaughter until it is completely stopped."

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The Mussalmans asked for the deletion of the five words printed in italics; and who could say that the generosity just shown by them did not deserve a reciprocal response on the part of the Hindus?

But those who followed Pandit Malaviya seemed adamant, even though Swami Shraddhanand pleaded that the words should be left out in order to meet the susceptibilities of the other side. In despair the President again called the meeting off for an interval, which was utilised by the Pandit and other Hindu members to come together and make up their minds as to what was possible.

Exactly the same thing happened as on the former occasion. Every hope for loop-hole having been found non-existent, when the meeting was resumed the Pandit got up and in a tense atmosphere declared that he and his friends would give way and agree to the words being left out.

For the first time the Conference really seemed to be swept by a wave of enthusiasm. Everybody shook hands with everybody else and a voice of thunder shouted above all the noise: 'Mahatma Gandhiji ki jai.'

That was the turning point. From that time onwards things 'went',—and they went with a real will towards Unity. With this will made up, Unity ceases to be an aspiration merely. It becomes an accomplished fact. And who can deny that behind it all, and above it all, there was the spiritual power of Mahatmaji himself, praying and fasting, fasting and praying,—“wrestling not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers: against the world-rulers of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in high places”? As a Christian myself, may I add what intense joy it has been to me to find, that in this spiritual battle the Chief Bishop of the Church of India (no longer, please God, 'the Church of England in India') should have been privileged to occupy no small place at the Conference, and have been given by Mahatmaji and by the love and good-will of all the Conference members this signal opportunity to carry out the solemn oath sworn by him at his consecration, “to set forward, as much as in him lies, quietness, peace and love among all men”.

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## THE CONFERENCE AT DELHI

BY PROF. RUCHI RAM SAHNI

Altogether, including ladies, about four hundred representatives were present for the Conference. At so short a notice, this response was in itself remarkable. They had come together "to end this quarrel, which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity." As is his wont, Mahatma Gandhi had taken the whole burden upon himself of the sins of his own people. Hence the prolonged fast.

Will the unique sacrifice he is making bring our broken heart-fragments closer together? Will it awaken in us, once again, a sense of common humanity? Shall we be able to find once more our brotherhood as men, and reinstate God in our hearts? These were some of the anxious questions, that the representatives were putting to themselves when the Conference opened.

It was a very happy idea not to leave out of the discussion the European element. The Metropolitan made an important contribution to the deliberations and his suggestions were always to the point and met with due appreciation.

The dominant note throughout the meeting was that sounded in the opening addresses. Not only did great issues hang on the spirit in which the representatives approached the problems, but they themselves were also meeting under the shadow of a national humiliation. It was their duty to wipe out the disgrace and shame which these fratricidal quarrels had brought upon the fair name of India. Thus Maulana Muhammad Ali and Pandit Motilal Nehru made the whole position plain at the outset.

There was a genuine fear that the anxiety to give satisfaction to Mahatma Gandhi might lead to a patched-up sort of peace, which would be no peace at all. But no one who was present at the Conference could fail to realise that antagonistic view-points were openly, freely, and frankly discussed. The ultimate decisions were not easily arrived at; they bore the marks of a severe tension which had at last been relaxed. The questions debated touched some of the dearest and deepest convictions, not only of those present at the Conference, but of millions of others whom they represented. It was natural, therefore, that heated excitement should have its place in the discussion side by side with cold logic.

The resolution on the cow question became the crux of the whole

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discussion. It engaged the attention of the Subjects' Committee for well nigh two days. In the end, the spirit of give and take prevailed, thanks mainly to the lead given by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on the one hand and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on the other. The Maulana is known to be one of the best speakers in the country. He enjoys further the advantage of being a great scholar and theologian in his own community. On the present occasion, he surpassed himself in the pathos and fervour of his eloquence and the generosity of his sentiment, prompted (as he himself pointed out) by the special circumstances of India consistently with the strict observance of the practices of his own faith. The appeal, which he made to both communities, was the turning point of the discussion. He asked his co-religionists to remember that cow-slaughter even for purposes of sacrifice was not a fundamental part of their religion, and he assured his Hindu friends that there were not a few Mussalman leaders, who had not only never tasted beef themselves, but were endeavouring to reduce the use of it among Mussalmans, if only to show their spirit of brotherliness with the Hindus.

The passing of the resolution formed the occasion for mutual congratulation and expression of thankfulness by the representatives of the various communities, to which the Metropolitan was not slow to add his own strong note of satisfaction.

The skill, tact and patience which Pandit Motilal Nehru showed, as Chairman, were the the subject of universal praise.

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*16th October, 1924*

MR. ASAF ALI

The Unity Conference was historic in every sense of the word. It will go down as a distinct landmark in Indian history. Its chief significance lies in the fact that the intellectual leaders of all Indian faiths agreed to take a step in the one direction which cramped orthodoxy had long regarded as forbidden. To one conscious of the deeper currents of life it seemed to point to powers beyond human ken fulfilling the Divine Purpose. The Mussalmans addressed themselves first with an instinctive, and later on with a definitely conscious effort, to the task of helping in the emancipation of India's conscience. They realised that they must render unto humanity the



things that were due to humanity. In the Quranic text, "Your faith to you, and to me mine" they found ready to hand the divine law of freedom of thought.

In the first resolution the Mussalmans recognised the preamble to the charter of universal human rights. The second resolution led to a crisis, but the timely intervention of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad averted a grave situation and his powerful plea for justice and fair play went home.

The general impression among the Mussalmans is that a very definite step has been taken both by themselves and by Hindus in the direction of the fuller recognition of one another's rights and duties. But the test of success must depend on the spirit in which the resolutions adopted are put into practice. The tension has been relieved. Those who took part in the deliberations are bound in honour to respect the spirit underlying the resolutions that have been unanimously passed. The one great thing achieved, however, is the atmosphere that has been created. It is just such an atmosphere that is requisite for Mahatma Gandhi's projected work of peace. His grateful penance and his pure prayer appear to have attained their end."

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Pt. DINA NATH

"The Unity Conference, as a widely representative assembly, well merited its name. Men of every shade of religious thought were gathered together. The Conference opened with prayer; and surely a national prayer of united India must have risen to the Throne of Grace, when all stood up together, and bowed their heads in silent worship.

"The first day's business must have disappointed many; but that day was really the foundation of all the subsequent success. The Conference went deep down into the causes of those things that had recently happened. For a time, it seemed a darkness and failure, and even thick darkness; but therein lay the grandeur of the height to which the Conference rose. One can never forget the spirit of brotherhood which touched all the members more and more as the Conference advanced. Towards this atmosphere I believe Maulana Abul Kalam Azad contributed more than any other. But the most impressive factor was this that the members felt, along with the Divine Presence, the essence of a great human personality, Mahatma Gandhi's human limitations restricted indeed his bodily presence, but

his spirit inspired the meetings. At times, as I have said, clouds obscured the vision, even dark clouds, but in the end they were dispelled.

"Wiser from the experience of the past, the Conference kept the direct object of removing those things which had caused such bitterness among the masses strictly before them and they became knit together in humility and mutual service. What is needed is that this same spirit of brotherhood should be now manifested in actual deeds.

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#### Mr. SIDHAVA

The Unity Conference has come and gone. Its success remains to be seen. On the third day, when the conference was dealing with the first resolution, the hearts of the two communities were revealed. There was distinct tension and had it not been for that great patriot Maulana Abul Kalam Azad I do not know what the fate of the conference would have been. I knew Maulana Sahib before: but I knew him better at the Conference. He is as rigidly attached to his religion as any other Mussalman, yet his patriotism towers above everything. We have passed resolutions. They have removed differences. What we want is action. Unless the leaders stand together and condemn the deeds of their own communities, where they are wrong, the chances of success are remote. Personally I feel that these disturbances, though a disgrace to us, will end automatically in a short time to come. A man without religion is no man. A man without patriotism is the same. We have not understood the value of patriotism; hence these communal disturbances. If we put patriotism first, we shall not think of such fanaticism. My religion is very dear to me. I shall not step an inch from my threshold each morning without reciting my morning prayer. Yet I consider myself first an Indian, then a Parsi. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and several past and present leaders have called themselves Indians first. If the spirit of patriotism penetrates deeply the hearts of all communities, it would go a long way to quell these disturbances'.

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#### THREE WELCOME PARAGRAPHS

The first of these comes from Colonel Gidney, the leader of the Anglo-Indian community from which the following is extracted:—

"Over and above and behind all I heard and saw, I could not help thinking of Mahatma Gandhi, the one man who has in-

spired this movement, and who himself thinks and is today showing to his countrymen that no sacrifice is too great to make, no penance too rigorous or severe to suffer, to teach the lesson of brotherhood and unity. This self-inflicted penance and this demonstration of his unselfishness had undoubtedly awakened and inspired in all those present at the Conference a desire to emulate him in making some personal sacrifices to attain this end."

The second paragraph comes from Mr. Arthur Moore, the Editor of the *Statesman* :—

The way to unity lies within each of us, whether we are Indians or Europeans. If each of us will try to rid himself of hatred and to understand that those who hold different views, whether religious or political, can be as sincere as ourselves—that the whole truth is something greater than either us or them, and that everyone by his surroundings, birth and education, is led to see truth from one particular standpoint, which is not the only one, then all our quarrels will cease. If you put a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Christian on three separate hill tops, on different sides of a lovely plain full of woods and waters, each will see a beautiful view and will think that that is how the other two should see it. All three views will be beautiful, and in a sense all three will be a true view, though they are so different. But the perfect loveliness of the plain is open only to the eye of God who sees it on all sides at once. Let us pray that God will grant us all a larger vision, and one more like his own, so that through our faulty human eyes, we too may glimpse the truth on all sides at once."

The third paragraph announces that at St. James Church in Calcutta (which has a large European congregation) and also at St. James Church in the Civil Lines, Delhi, and in many places elsewhere, special prayers were offered at the Holy Communion on behalf of the Unity Conference, that its deliberations might be guided aright by the divine grace and that peace and concord might be restored between Hindus and Muslims wherever friction had occurred. At Delhi, the Metropolitan of India himself conducted the prayers. I have it on good authority, that in Catholic churches also the Mass was celebrated with this special intention. Furthermore, in Presbyterian and other churches the same prayers were offered. When the doctor urged Mahatmaji, on one of the most critical days of the fast, not to

continue it any longer because dangerous symptoms had appeared, with a gentle smile on his face Mahatmaji wrote on the slate (it was his day of silence): "you have forgotten the power of prayer."

As the Metropolitan has reminded us in his illuminating article, the power of prayer was behind the Conference. It was all the while present with Mahatmaji in his fast also.

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## THE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

BY MAULANA MAHOMED ALI

Recent deplorable happenings, all over the-country, had indicated that there was either not a clear enough recognition of the rights of others, or at least not a sufficient respect for them. The realisation of this was most painful to those of us, who had hoped in 1921, that unity had at last come to this distracted and disunited land. False pride did not make us unwilling to face facts; and we set about profiting from our own disillusionment. Two friends of mine from Allahabad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Manzar Ali Sokhta, who were in intimate daily intercourse since their boyhood, had proved that Hindu Muslim unity could be a reality. They told me that, in their view, a restatement of rights must be the first step, and that complete toleration, without the least reservation, must be the solid rock on which we must build up the superstructure of Unity. This tallied with my own conclusions, and we discussed together at an informal meeting how best this plan could be executed.

In my opening speech at the Conference, I took particular pains to explain that although our first step must be the restatement of communal rights, in all their nakedness, we should fail altogether unless we took the next step, namely, a restatement of moral obligations with regard to the exercise of these rights and the duty of every community, in a composite nation such as ours, to make as great a renunciation of its undoubted rights as possible without prejudice to the discharge of religious duties. I did not expect that a restatement of elementary rights would evoke such opposition as it did; but having adopted the statement of the two friends I have mentioned as my own, and having placed before the Conference so that it might form the basis of discussion, I persisted in the attempt to get these communal rights recognised.

How painful for me was the attempt to get the right of Mussalmans to kill cows recognised by orthodox Hindus can be realised only by those, who (like Mahatma Gandhi himself) know how deeply I feel the obligation under which he and his Hindu lieutenant had placed all Mussalmans by their advocacy of the Khilafat cause. All the Muslim members agreed that we must insist on the recognition of this right, if only to make possible the success of our efforts for the gradual renunciation of this right by millions of our poorer co-religionists. But I doubt if the orthodox section of our Hindu fellow-countrymen would have put on record this recognition of this clear right, if I had not added to the resolution an appeal by the Muslim members of the Conference to their fellow Muslims to reduce cow killing with a view to its total stoppage.

I have been charged with a great indiscretion in making such an appeal without consulting other Muslim members, but in view of the happy result of that 'indiscretion', I am not sorry for it, and I have already apologised to those whom I had quite unintentionally neglected. I recognise, with Lala Lajpatrai, that total stoppage of cow killing is hardly possible for a long time to come; but we must do our best to reduce cow killing; and as my personal contribution I presented to Mahatma Gandhi, when he broke his fast, a cow, which I purchased from a butcher, so that he might send it to a *panjrapole*. I do not share the Hindus' reverence for the cow; but so long as my Hindu brethren revere a cow, I shall not only take no part in killing it, but also do all I can to save it.

The discussion about the cow, which resulted both in the recognition of a right, and also in a statement regarding the manner in which that right should be exercised, provided the Conference with a precedent for dealing with the minor question of music before mosques, either along with processions, or at the time of Hindu worship; and it did not take us long to settle it. I wish that the protagonists on either side had been less exacting in their demands, and more generous in conceding a point to those with whom they were peacefully contending. That would have saved much time and not a little temper. But the final result was, on the whole, very satisfactory, and I shall not be kill-joy to criticise too meticulously the process by which we arrived at it. The test will be the manner in which the extremists on both sides act after returning home and the precept and example into which they translate the Conference resolutions.

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"My hope is large in Time.

And that which shapes it to some perfect end."

The resolutions of the Unity Conference do not constitute a document, which a patriotic Indian can place before a foreigner with any conscious pride. If cow killing and noisy processions are our "horizon's utter sum," then our Congresses are a mere mockery.

"Let us ring down—the farce is nothing worth." Nevertheless, if the Unity Conference has settled once for all even such petty points as these, it must be regarded as a success. Let us not forget, however, that it has yet to accomplish something far greater. Cow killing and music before mosques were only symptoms of a national disease, not the disease itself. The disease itself is personal and communal selfishness. It is not the ignorant masses that are the worst victims of this disease, but the little educated who hanker after Government and municipal posts. It is petty exploitation that must cease, if India is to be truly re-united. The Punjab, which is the worst affected area in all India today, is not so much the land of five rivers as the land of five jobs. The whole quarrel is whether Hindus are to get three jobs out of the five, or the Mussalmans. Among the major provinces, the Mussalman is in a minority everywhere except in Bengal and the Punjab. In Bengal, the Mussalman is still altogether backward, in spite of the stimulus given by the Partition. Deshbandhu Das has done the wisest thing by giving him a helping hand. In the Punjab, the Hindu is in a smaller minority than in Bengal and the Mussalman is not so backward. There is no Deshbandhu Das there, but only a Fazl Husain.

Mahatma Gandhi knew what was wrong with the Punjab, and among the resolutions he had framed for my guidance he had included one for the appointment of a commission to invite representative opinion about the rights of minorities and the publication of its report by the middle of December. It was a very unwise step for the Conference to reject this while I was absent, but I feel sure that the moment Mahatma Gandhi is able to go about, he will take steps to remedy this.

By that time, I trust that a better atmosphere will have been created; and in that atmosphere, the educated classes, who are mainly responsible for exciting the masses, will be better able to discuss those other urgent issues in which they are far more interested than in cow-killing and musical processions. Exploitation does not make it

possible, to have free competition. But even if free competition were today possible, India does not so much require this Manchester doctrine as the Hindu joint family system, in which the strong support the weak. For it is the fraternal spirit we need ; and it is this fraternal spirit, which consorts with our national genius. Our unity will be a unity of federation :

“Not like to like, but like in difference  
Self-reverent each, and reverencing each ;  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other, even as those who love.”

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### THE HINDU-MUSLIM CONFERENCE

BY THE MOST REV. THE BISHOP OF CALCUTTA

It was Mahatma Gandhi's fast that was the moving cause of the Conference ; and though he was not present, it was in no small measure the spirit with which he had inspired his genuine followers that led to the successful issue of its deliberations. For there were a difference, easy to discern, among those who were members of the Conference. On the one hand, were those who were first and foremost politicians ; and on the other those who had learnt the meaning of love and longed for unity, not merely as a means to an end, but as a good in itself. They could say with the sweet singer of Israel,—‘Behold, brethren, how good and pleasant a thing it is, to dwell together in unity.’ Both were inspired by legitimate motives ; but it was the nobler motive of love which, I believe, really won the victory. The political motive would have been satisfied with a peace based upon compromise ; but the Conference secured a peace that was based on the surer and more lasting foundation of mutual respect and toleration. A compromise is the outcome of bargaining and the assertion of rights ; but tolerance is the outcome of that humility which recognises the rights of others and one's own limitations. A compromise, more often than not, will only remain in force so long as the relative strength of the respective parties remains the same ; but toleration is independent of the varying power with which a man can enforce his own views.

At the beginning of the Conference the partisan bitterness which had led to grievous outbreaks of violence in several places, was

manifest, though the speakers restrained themselves with admirable self-control. But as the days passed, this feeling gave place to one of goodwill and a desire to understand the view point of those from whom they differed.

There were, to my mind, three contributing causes to his result. Mahatma Gandhi had not merely announced his fast, but he had called men to prayer; and the multitude of those who responded was great. Men and women of many diverse faiths prayed with deep earnestness that peace might be restored among the peoples of India.

Again, though the Mahatma's name was not frequently mentioned and speakers deliberately refrained from appeal to his authority in support of the pleas which they urged, for there was a strong desire that reason rather than authority should determine the issues,—yet the thought of him fasting and praying not far from where we were all assembled could not but influence us all. All knew that bitterness was alien to his nature, and violence abhorrent, and if the spirit that inspired his fast was to find any counterpart in the spirit which animated the Conference, bitterness must give place to good-will, if not to the nobler spirit of love.

Yet again, the members of the Conference were not delegates, charged by those whom they represented to maintain a definite opinion, or champion a cause; they were simply there, as independent persons, invited by three well-known leaders to seek the true basis of unity. Their hands were not tied. They were free to listen to and weigh arguments; the appeal could be made to conscience and reason. Prejudices, when brought out into the light of truth, were recognised for what they really were.

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*23rd October, 1924*

DR. S. K. DATTA

Among the contributions which appeared on Unity Day, I have extracted from the '*Bengalee*' the following paragraph from Dr. S. K. Datta's statement on the religious problem in India.

"Here then is my main point. Ordinary religion is a queer thing; it covers a multitude of sins—in this no religion is an exception. During a certain stage of development the common mind of a community expresses itself in the terms of religion. Let us



in an unprejudiced way venture to carry this a little further in considering some of our own problems.

(i) The Hindus form the great bulk of the people of India. They include in their number the landlords, traders, financiers and capitalists of the country. The administration uses their undoubted talents in all posts, including posts of great responsibility. Further, the professional classes were the first to take the fullest advantage of modern education and are rapidly becoming the new governing class in India.

(ii) The Mussalmans of India are largely agriculturists, small occupancy tenants, as in Eastern Bengal, or small farmers with proprietary rights in the Punjab. These agricultural communities were the results not of forcible conversion, but they found in Islam a bulwark against the social intolerance of Brahminism, or the economic oppression of Hindu finance. In addition, the political prestige of the Mussalman conqueror was probably an added attraction. Educationally the community has been backward. They find themselves to-day therefore in a singularly weak position.

(iii) The Christian community in India, which numbers nearly six millions, represents the greatest revolutionary movement from the depressed classes, or the landless classes, in India. As a community, it is growing rapidly; and the chief impetus at work is a desire for better conditions. The prediction may possibly be made, that when the Christian community reaches the figure of twenty millions, it will put forth its demand in no uncertain terms; and the first symptom will be religious friction.

It is to this problem of economic and political relationships, that the public mind must be directed, if a way out is to be discovered. The western world has a similar problem in the relations of the worker, the consumer, and the capitalist, to one another. Class hatred in Europe has its counterpart in India in our religious feuds. Are we sufficient in numbers to devote ourselves to ensure that every man, woman and child in India has the fullest opportunity for development and expression?"

In an article on the 'Unity Problem' I have ventured to refer to this paragraph; and I would ask that it should be read carefully in connection with Maulana Mahomed Ali's statement. It very often

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appeared to me, during the discussions of the Unity Conference itself, that this economic basis was being almost entirely neglected. Yet among the struggling and vocal middle classes of both communities, it is just here where the friction begins. It is this rising middle class, which is able to excite the passions of the masses on both sides. It is also able to allay them.

C. F. A.

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### SJT. SATIS CHANDRA MUKERJEE

The following telegram was sent by Sjt Satish Chandra Mukherji for the Conference:—

"September 20, 1924, Calcutta. To Mahadev and Krishna-das, Comrade Office, Delhi.

"Kindly consider the following suggestion:—A systematic All India movement should be organised under a Central Committee supported by provincial and subordinate organisations, requiring men of all different faiths to gather in their homes, temples, mosques, churches, and prayer houses, weekly or oftener to offer prayer to cleanse their hearts from all bitterness and ill-will towards men of other faiths.

"This Central Committee will also receive and hear complaints and grievances forwarded through whatever channel and organise methods of their disposal under the direction of the Central Committee itself, which should be autonomous with powers to frame its own constitution and rules for the direction of provincial and subordinate committees.

"God will yet forgive India and protect Mahatmaji. Please forward this to Mr. Asaf Ali Secretary of the Conference, and inform him that I am quite disabled through influenza and bronchial trouble and cannot attend the Unity Conference.

Satish Chandra Mukherji.

P. S. I have another suggestion to make. Where there has been a desecration or demolition of a temple, church or mosque by people of other faiths, the latter should consider it a matter of duty to repair or restore such temple, church or mosque; and it will be in the power of the Central Committee to organise and help forward such restoration. Every religious denomination should also be at liberty to help in such work.

Satish Chandra Mukherji,"

With reference to the first part of Satish Babu's proposal, the Metropolitan's article on Unity, last week, went directly to the same point. With regard to the second paragraph, the Unity Conference has actually commissioned such a Central Committee with power to add to its numbers. The third suggestion is one which would meet the approval of all. It should not be looked upon, however, merely as a penalty imposed on one community, which may have done the mischief, but rather regarded as expressing the common sin of all, that such a desecration should ever occur.

C. F. A.

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### BORODADA'S DREAM

I cannot refrain from sharing with the readers of *Young India* every word of the perfect letter that has come to me from Borodada. It reads as follows:

"My dearest Charlie, I am sending you this small bit of writing, which, if you think worth publishing in *Young India* you may take every liberty with, and make any additions or alterations which may seem proper to you. I have called it 'A Political Dream':—

"I dreamt that I was half German, half French, and that I was placed at the head of both the French and the German people. In both these capacities, I first settled the differences between the Germans and the French by making small sacrifices on behalf of both and after that I tried to settle the differences between England and the Continental Powers. It is needless to say that I succeeded in this last attempt of mine to my heart's content, and thereafter peace reigned in Europe from one end to the other. Just then a great conch shell sounded with a solemn sound reaching to the skies. This brought to my remembrance that I was neither Napoleon Buonaparte nor the Kaiser of some twenty years ago, but that I was the great Akbar Shah sitting on the throne of Delhi. I then convened a meeting of Pandits, Moulavies and Padris of India and asked them to explain to me the best teachings of the Vedas, Puranas, Koran and Bible. They did so with all their heart. At the close of the meeting all found out that these teachings differed only in sound but that their sense was exactly the same. Then the Pandits, Moulvies and Padris embraced one another like dear brothers who had met together after a long separation, and thereafter all India acknowledged that they worshipped the same Divine Father and therefore their religion was at bottom one and the same."

C. F. A.

## "THE TRUMPET OF A PROPHECY"

Letters are now constantly arriving in India from unknown friends in America and Europe, which show the silent growth of the new ideas of spiritual force generated in India. One of these letters is so interesting that I am tempted to share some portion of it with the readers of *Young India*. This unknown correspondent writes :

"My reasons for wanting to come to India are, that I feel deeply the spiritual and moral deterioration of the West, and I am impelled to get into a simpler and more sincere form of living. Of course, I know full well that India is not devoid of evils of its own. But having followed closely the trend of events, since my visit to India in 1914, I believe that I can find a life there, whose tendencies are more what I really care for, and in which I can be really useful and happy. I have read a number of your articles in the 'Manchester Guardian', some of Rabindranath Tagore's book, and many of Mahatma Gandhi's utterances. It has been my special duty in America to deal with industrial problems from the point of view both of the employer and the employed; but developments in my own thinking have led me to agriculture, and I am now working as a farm hand in order to gain practical experience. From my mother, I have inherited a love for art and music. Lately, I have been very deeply impressed by Mr. Gandhi's spiritual insight and the Christ-like character of his life and teachings. Therefore I long to join the great tide of humanity which has been released in India by him."

Such letters keep coming from abroad. They mention two names only, Gandhi and Tagore. Now, from one of these two, now, from the other, the writers of these letters have tried to grasp some point which needs elucidation. They are puzzled, startled, attracted, won. With the Western energy, they desire to act. Many wish to come, either to Sabarmati or to Santiniketan.

We are still within the range of Shelley and Byron's Centenary. A new revolution in human thought has begun parallel to that which took place a century ago. This time, it starts from India. What has been happening of late has constantly reminded of the conclusion of Shelley's gratest ode. The last stanza of it is too perfect to curtail any line of it; but it is the closing portion, where the comparison is most complete :

Make me thy lyre even as the forest is :

What if my leaves are falling like its own ?

The Tumult of thy mighty harmonies  
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me. Impetuous one!  
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
And by the incantation of this verse  
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind.  
Be, through my lips, to unawakened earth  
The trumpet of a prophecy. O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

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*23rd October, 1924*

### THE UNITY PROBLEM

BY C. F. ANDREWS

There is one aspect of the Unity Problem, which needs to be studied statistically, and worked out in all its different bearings, if a sane and temperate view is to be taken of the whole situation. It represents the children's cry for bread, the cry of hunger, which rises all over the world, and not in India alone. This cry everywhere awakens passions and leads to riots and hatreds. Religion, race, colour, creed, caste,—all these are utilised by the excited mind, that either faces naked hunger on the spot, or else sees and fears the possibility of destitution in the future. As things stand today, within the human race, there is a frantic pressure from below upwards and a frantic pressure from above downwards. In the impact of these two forces, lies the saddest drama of human life. There are two tragic situations, frequently occurring in history, corresponding to these two forms of pressure. The former of these is where a position of superiority, held for long, is threatened by a newly rising power. The latter is where a newly rising power does not yet feel itself secure and wishes at all costs to stabilise its own security.

Let me give an illustration from outside India first of all. Sarojini Devi discovered, in South Africa, a racial situation, which was quite evidently a puzzle to her. She found English people, who were otherwise kindly and humane, dealing brutally with Indians and

Africans. She probed down, in her own imaginative way, to the ultimate cause. For while she saw that colour prejudice came crucially into the problem, there was something more fundamental,—the sheer struggle for existence. The white race had emigrated to South Africa and had at first found ample space for its own expansion, and also a willing deference from the other races on account of its display of superior mechanical power. But, inevitably this rapid expansion forward, made by small numbers of one single race, had its own limits; the tide of the other races swept back again and in the long run their greater numbers told. The white race, before it could establish its own security, found itself being threatened by the incoming tide. At once a violent outbreak of colour prejudice arose. Instead of mingling with the other races and settling down side by side with them (as we see the white race actually doing in South America) the colour bar has been set up. Every artificial restriction has been made, to preserve both privilege and power. Dean Inge has already predicted, in his *Outspoken Essays*, what the end is certain to be. He predicts the inevitable decay of the white race.

One more example may illustrate a further side of the same problem. In the dark ages of Europe the Jews were fewer in number, but far more cultured than the Christians. The Christians were then barbarous: the Jews had inherited traditional advantages and were intellectually superior. From certain areas, where they had freedom, they became the money-lenders of the rest of Europe. They had gained that sinister reputation. Physically they were weaker: intellectually they were stronger. The barbarous Christian powers crushed them mercilessly. Massacre followed upon massacre. Religion fanned the flame of persecution.

Let us turn back to modern India, and see what is happening today. While every one condemns the outbreaks which have occurred, it is necessary to find out the cause of the disease. Herein I have been most helped hitherto by Maulana Mahomed Ali's statement about the Conference and the paragraph written by Dr. S. K. Datta which I am publishing elsewhere.

I trust that I shall be forgiven if I try to explain what I mean, in my own way, however crudely. In the north of India, the Mussalman power had been in the ascendant for centuries. At first, the effect of the British occupation upon this ascendancy was not realised: but after the Mutiny the Mussalmans undoubtedly fell back in modern

education, while the Hindus pressed eagerly forward. The Aligarh movement, under Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, did something to relieve the immediate pressure and to restore the Mussalman position, but the tide of modern education swept forward everywhere, in every province, and it carried the Hindus in its wake, into new economic power and position, much further than the Mussalmans.

But this newly acquired power, in the hands of the Hindus, was still insecure. At any moment, it might be threatened from the other side. This has naturally led the Hindus to desire to seize every opening and to establish the position already gained, lest it be snatched away from them and they should fall back once more.

Here we have an economic background, on which the racial and religious passions have been able to work. What is the solution? I know nothing more to the point than certain concluding sentences in Maulana Mahomed Ali's article, to which I have already referred, and I shall quote them in conclusion. He writes.

"Even if free competition between the communities were today possible, India does not so much require this 'Manchester' doctrine of competition as the Hindu joint family system, in which the strong support the weak. For it is the fraternal spirit that we need; and it is this fraternal spirit, which best consorts with our Indian national genius".

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*16th October, 1924*

### AN IMPORTANT LETTER

BY S. E. STOKES

[Mr. Stokes of Kotgarh attended the Conference for the first two days and then was obliged to hurry back to his home in the hills on account of the storms and floods. He has specially mentioned in his letter to me that his views are those obtained during the first two days only. As they are so striking in their character, and at the same time so deep in their insight, I am using the privilege of a friend in giving a portion of his letter to the public. At the same time, it must be remembered that he did not stay for the last days of the Conference, when a better spirit prevailed. C. F. A.]

"Mahatmaji is the living embodiment of the moral question, with which God has confronted India,—and in a larger sense, Humanity, today. He, and the message he represents by life

and word, must be faced squarely, if the world is to pass safely through the dangerous ocean that lies ahead. That message, as I read it, may be summed up in the words: 'Except a man be born anew, he cannot see, much less enter into the Kingdom of God.' The same is true of any people. Mahatmaji calls that kingdom 'Swarajya', and he is infinitely more interested in the *fact* of its advent than in its form. It is the kingdom where men love their neighbours as dynamically as they love themselves, in which man's will is to live by God's will, and in which his actions and endeavours spring from his sense of the essential oneness of all living and experiencing in God. The people say 'What shall we do to be saved?'. Mahatmaji replies, 'Except you be born anew, you cannot enter into the only kingdom which is salvation, simply because it is the only living kingdom that has not its roots in selfishness.' The leaders then call a conference to discover a way to enter, and seek to find a door of salvation which does not demand the sacrifice of selfishness. Of course, I recognise how hard they have tried to evolve a formula which will make unity possible, and how much some of them would sacrifice to make unity possible—all but 'the one thing needful.' Many will sacrifice individual selfishness, but the demand that they sacrifice communal selfishness makes them 'turn away sorrowful.'

"That spirit of self-sacrifice, in its larger sense, seemed to me to be wanting. The stress during the two days on which I was present seemed to me to be upon the conception of *rights* rather than upon responsibilities. There seemed to be more eagerness to point out the sins of the other party than to search one's own heart for its share in the guilt for the troubles with which we are confronted. I know that it takes considerable bravery to search one's own heart, and greater still to face the issues it raises; but the true solution of all that is without must be sought for within; and the eyes of those who were assembled at Delhi were too often looking outward, not inward.

"However, I think the conference may do good. Hindus and Muslims have learned, for a few days, to talk together calmly and to listen without expressing resentment with regard to views with which they had little sympathy. After all, this too is a moral discipline. How much fruit it will bear, we shall be able to see in the course of the next few months."

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*5th February, 1925*

TOWARDS UNITY

BY M. K. GANDHI

The All Parties Committee met to consider the question referred to it by the Conference. It appointed a sub-committee of nearly fifty to consider the question. The sub-committee appointed a smaller committee to consider all possible Swaraj schemes and report to the sub-committee the results of its deliberations. Dr. Besant is labouring at this smaller committee with her usual application and energy which put to shame younger men and women. But naturally the attention centred round the Hindu-Muslim problem; not that it is intrinsically more important except for individuals like me but because it blocks all progress towards Swaraj. The sub-committee proved too formal for the task. It was necessary to avoid the reserve and the stiffness even of a committee and to be absolutely informal and to have a still smaller number of persons. This was done and a few of each community met at Hakim Saheb's house. The result has been succinctly given to the Press by Pandit Motilal Nehru. I agree that there is no cause for anxiety or disappointment. For all want a solution. Some want it at once, some regard the time not to be seasonable, some would sacrifice everything to get a solution, others would be cautious and would wait till they have secured what to them is an indispensable minimum. But all agreed that a solution of the problem was essential to Swaraj. And all want Swaraj, a solution must not be beyond the reach of those who are engaged in finding it. The prospect was never so bright as when we parted to meet again on 23th February. Meanwhile, every one is to explore fresh avenues to a settlement.

The public will want to know my view of communal representation. I am opposed to it with all my heart but I would agree to anything so long as it ensures peace and is honourable to both the parties. In the absence of agreement on the plans suggested by either party I have presented a solution which might answer the purpose. But I need not discuss it at the present stage. I hope that the responsible members of both the communities will leave no stone unturned whether by means of private, quiet talks or by means of a public expression of their opinions. I hope too that newspaper-men will write nothing to irritate any party but will observe discreet silence where they cannot usefully assist.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED  
AT THE UNITY CONFERENCE—DELHI.

RESOLUTION No I.

(This Conference places on record its deep grief and concern at the fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undertaken. This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential and condemns any desecration of places of worship to whatsoever faith they may belong and any persecution or punishment of any persons for adopting or reverting to any faith and further condemns any attempt by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to enforce one's own religious observances at the cost of the rights of others.

The members of the Conference assure Mahatma Gandhi and pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce these principles and to condemn any deviation from them even under provocation. This Conference further authorises the President to convey personally to Mahatma Gandhi the united wish of this Conference that Mahatma Gandhi should immediately break his fast in order to permit this Conference to have the benefit of his co-operation, advice and guidance in deciding upon the speediest means of effectively checking the evil which is fast spreading over the country.

RESOLUTION No II.

This Conference deplores the dissensions and quarrels that are now going on between Hindus and Muslims in several places in India resulting in loss of life, burning and plunder of property and desecration of temples. The Conference regards them as barbarous and contrary to religion. The Conference tenders its warm sympathy to the sufferers. This Conference is of opinion that it is unlawful and irreligious for any person to take the law into his own hands by way of retaliation or punishment. The Conference is of opinion that all differences, no matter of what nature soever, should be referred to arbitration and if that be impossible even to a court of law.

RESOLUTION No III.

There shall be a Central National Panchayat of not more than 15 persons, with power to organise and appoint local Panchayats in consultation with the local representatives of the different commu-

nities, to enquire into and settle all disputes and differences including recent occurrences, where necessary and desirable. The said National Panchayat shall have power to frame rules and regulations for carrying out this resolution.

The Conference appoints the following to act as the Central National Panchayat with power to add to their number up to 15 and co-opt local representatives as additional members:—

1. Mahatma Gandhi (*Chairman and Convenor*)
2. Hakim Ajmal Khan
3. Lala Lajpat Rai
4. Mr. G. K. Narayan
5. Dr. S. K. Datta
6. Master Sunder Singh of Lyallpur.

RESOLUTION No IV.

With a view to give effect to the general principles for promoting better relations between the various communities of India laid down in Resolution I and to secure full toleration of all faiths, beliefs and religious practices this Conference records its opinion:—

1. That every individual or group shall have full liberty to hold and give expression to his or their beliefs and follow any religious practice with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with their rights. In no case may such individual or group revile the founders, holy persons or tenets of any other faith.

2. That all places of worship, of whatever faith or religion, shall be considered sacred and inviolable and shall on no account be attacked or desecrated whether as a result of provocation or by way of retaliation for sacrilege of the same nature. It shall be the duty of every citizen, of whatever faith or religion, to prevent such attack or desecration as far as possible and where such attack or desecration has taken place it shall always be promptly condemned.

3. That Hindus must not expect that the exercise of the right of cow-slaughter by Muslims can or will be stopped by the use of force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court but only by mutual consent and must trust to the good sense of Muslims and the establishment of better relations between the two communities to create deeper respect for their feelings.

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Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence, nor will it authorise cow-slaughter in a place where it has not taken place before; any dispute on facts should be settled by the National Panchayat formed under resolution No. 3.

Cow-slaughter shall not take place in a way offensive to the religious sentiments of the Hindus.

The Muslim members of the Conference hereby call upon their co-religionists to do everything in their power to reduce cow-slaughter.

4. That Muslims must not expect to stop Hindu music near or in front of mosques by force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court except by mutual consent but must rely upon the good sense of Hindus to respect their feelings.

Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence nor shall it authorise the playing of music in front of mosques where it has not been played before. Any dispute with regard to the latter shall be referred for settlement to the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

5. The Hindu members of this Conference call upon their co-religionists to avoid playing music before mosques in such a manner as to disturb congregational prayers.

That Muslims must not expect to stop by force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court, except by mutual consent, the performance of *arti* or the playing of music including the blowing of *shankhs* by Hindus during worship and on other occasions in their houses or temples or public places at any time even if the house or temple or place in question is situated in close proximity to a mosque; but they should trust to the good sense of the Hindus to accommodate them.

6. Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence; any dispute on facts should be settled by the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

That Muslims are at liberty to chant *Asan* or offer prayers

in their own houses or in any mosque or public place not set apart for the religious observance of any other community.

7. Where the slaughter of an animal or sale of meat is permissible on other grounds, no objection shall be taken to the method of slaughter, whether by *Jhatka* *Bali* or *Zibah*.

Wherever there is any dispute regarding the sale of any kind of meat in a particular locality or quarter it shall be referred for settlement to the local Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

8. That every individual is at liberty to follow any faith and to change it whenever he so wills, and shall not by reason of such change of faith render himself liable to any punishment or persecution at the hands of the followers of the faith renounced by him.

9. That every individual or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert another by argument or persuasion but must not attempt to do so or prevent its being done by force, fraud or other unfair means, such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under 16 years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under 16 years of age is found stranded without his parent or guardian by a person of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy about any conversion or re-conversion.

10. That no community should attempt to stop by force the construction of a new place of worship by a member of another community on his own land but such new place of worship should be built at a reasonable distance from an existing place of worship of any other community.

#### RESOLUTION No. V.

This Conference is of opinion that a section of the press, specially in the North, is responsible for increasing the tension between different communities by publishing wild exaggerations, reviling each other's religion and by every means fomenting prejudice, and condemns such writings and appeals to the public to stop patronage of such newspapers and pamphlets and advises central and local panchayats to supervise such writings and from time to time to publish correct versions.

#### RESOLUTION NO. VI.

It having been represented to this Conference that in certain

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places acts of impropriety have been committed in relation to mosques the Hindu members of this Conference condemn such acts wherever committed.

### RESOLUTION NO. VII.

The Hindu and Muslim members of this Conference call upon their co-religionists to extend full tolerance to the minor communities of India and to deal with them in all questions of communal intercourse with justice and generosity.

### RESOLUTION NO. VIII.

This Conference is of opinion that attempts on behalf of members of one community to boycott members of any other community and to stop social or commercial relations with them made in certain parts of the country are reprehensible and are an effective bar to the promotion of good relations between the various communities in India. The Conference therefore appeals to all communities to avoid any such boycotts and exhibitions of ill-will.

### RESOLUTION NO. IX.

This Conference calls upon men and women of all communities throughout the country to offer daily prayers during the last critical week of Mahatmaji's fast and to organise mass meetings on the EIGHTH of OCTOBER in every town and village to express the Nation's thankfulness to the Almighty and to pray that the spirit of good-will and brotherliness may pervade and unite all the communities of India and that the principles of full religious toleration and mutual good-will declared in this Conference may be adopted and given effect to by members of all communities in India.)

DELHI                    )  
2nd October, 1924.    )

SHUAIB QURESHI  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
*Secretaries of the Conference.*

*31st October, 1924.*

### THE KOHAT VISIT

The following correspondence passed between Mr. Gandhi and the Viceroy in connection with the former's proposed visit to Kohat :—

Mr. Gandhi addressed the following letter to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy on the 16th :

"As soon as I have gathered sufficient strength it is my intention, if permitted, to go to Kohat in the company of some Mussalman and some Hindu friends. My object in wanting to go to Kohat is to find out from the inhabitants the causes of the Hindu-Muslim dissensions and, if possible, with the help of friends, to bring about peace between the two communities. I shall thank you to let me know as early as possible whether His Excellency the Viceroy will permit me and my friends to proceed to Kohat for the purpose mentioned."

On the 24th Mr. Gandhi sent the following telegram as no reply had been received till then.—

"May I have a reply by wire to my letter dated the 16th"

In reply to the above, the following telegram was received from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, dated October 26 :—

"You do not state in your letter dated October 16 when you propose to visit Kohat. Please state for his Excellency's information on what date approximately it is you desire to visit Kohat. Kindly send your reply by telegram."

Mr. Gandhi thereupon wired as follows on the 27th.—

"Thanks for the wire. It is my intention to leave Delhi with my colleagues on November 1, or as early as possible, thereafter to stay at Rawalpindi for two or three days and then proceed to Kohat staying there for three or four days.

In reply to the above the following telegram dated the 28th was received.

"Thanks for your telegram. From the information he has received from the N. W. F. Province. H. E. the Viceroy is of opinion that the date you mention are not propitious for your visit to Kohat and that you will be very well advised to defer it until later.

"As you are aware, efforts have been made for some time past to bring the two communities together again at Kohat to facilitate the resettlement of Hindus and to induce the resumption of former neighbourly relations. If the course of those negotiations continues undisturbed, there is good hope of permanent peace in future, but at the moment feelings are raw and any cause may again arouse irritation in the recent wounds.

"There is apprehension, indeed it is almost inevitable, that excitement may be aroused by your visit which despite your intentions may cause a set-back there. The Hindus will naturally gather in considerable numbers to meet you and it is probable the Mahomedans will also assemble forces and that trans-border Muslims might come in to support the latter. It is feared that the result would be to range the two communities into sharply separated and hostile camps and to intensify the feelings in each camp and there might be even more deplorable results from friction between the two camps.

"For this reason, in his Excellency's view, it would be most unwise and undesirable for you to visit Kohat with



your friends on the dates you indicate. It is appreciated that your desire is to foster unity between the two communities: but it must be remembered that in this frontier district forces may be set in motion which it may be difficult to control.

"His Excellency regrets that he cannot countenance your visit at present. It may be possible for his Excellency to reconsider this view at a later date when the position has changed and when feelings have had sufficient time to become less openly and actively bitter and only inner prejudices from past events at Kohat remain to be finally soothed, healed or eradicated."

Telegram from Mr. Gandhi to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, dated October 28.—

"Thanks for the wire. While I bow to his Excellency's decision, I venture to state that it was not my intention to encourage the Hindu refugees at Rawalpindi to return to Kohat unless the Kohat Mussalmans were willing and eager to receive them with open arms.

"Had I been permitted to proceed to Kohat it was my intention to use with the assistance of Mussalman friends the friendly relations which, I believe, I enjoy with Mussalmans to bring about an amicable settlement. I thought, and still think, that heart unity between the two communities can be brought about by non-officials rather than by officials. The latter can undoubtedly assist in many silent unofficial ways but my invariable experience shows that official as officials can only bring about an armed neutrality but cannot restore friendship.

"As the public have been led to believe that my visit to Kohat was impending I propose to publish this correspondence unless his Excellency desires otherwise."

Telegram from the Private Secretary to the

Viceroy, to Mr. Gandhi, dated October 28 in reply to the above :

"Thank you for your telegram. His Excellency has noted your views. Having regard to the special considerations to which he referred in my previous telegram he must adhere to the decision. 'There is no objection to your publishing the correspondence.'"

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*18th December, 1924*

## THE KOHAT TRAGEDY

BY M. K. GANDHI

The Government of India has rung down the curtain upon the Kohat tragedy. In the Viceregal reply to Pandit Malaviyaji \* the Government had prepared the public for some such resolution as is now before the public. The resolution is a demonstration of the Government's unchallengeable supremacy and disregard of public opinion, as it is also a demonstration of national impotence. To me the Kohat tragedy is not so much a result of Hindu-Muslim tension as of the utter worthlessness and incompetence of the local administration. Had they performed their elementary duty of protecting life and property, the wanton destruction begun and continued in broad daylight could have been easily prevented. But like Nero the authority watched and danced while Rome was burning. The authority cannot plead helplessness. It had ample resources at its disposal. It was at no time overwhelmed except by its own criminal indifference and callousness.

And now the Government of India has become

\* Omitted in this collection.

partner in the crime by white-washing the local officials and even converting their neglect or worse into 'coolness and courage.'

One would have expected a full, open and independent inquiry. But nothing beyond a departmental inquiry at which the public was unrepresented took place. Its finding can command no public confidence. The refugees from Rai Bahadur Sardar Makhansing downward whom my Mussalman colleagues and I saw, whilst admitting that a pamphlet containing the highly insulting verses was published by Lala Jiwandas, said that ample amends were made for the publication by the Hindus and that the Hindu firing was in self-defence and after the destruction had been started by the Mussalmans. On behalf of the Kohat Mussalmans it was contended that sufficient amends were not made with regard to the pamphlet and that the Mussalman destruction and firing took place after the Hindus had opened fire and taken Mussalman life. Unfortunately the Mussalmans of Kohat not having come to Rawalpindi, we were unable to find out the real truth. It is, therefore, difficult to say that the Government of India's distribution of blame is erroneous. But its finding cannot be accepted as an impartial or acceptable judgment. The Hindus of Kohat cannot be expected to accept and submit to the finding. Nor can such a finding, because it seems to favour the Mussalman contention, be any consolation to the Mussalmans of Kohat. For it would be wrong for the Mussalman public to applaud the Government of India's finding, because it for the moment seems to support the Mussalman contention. Any finding to be satisfactory must be joint and arrived at by Hindus and Mussalmans of proved impartiality. The Government of

India resolution is therefore a challenge to both the communities. It tells the Hindu refugees to return to Kohat on pain of submission to humiliating conditions. It bribes the Mussalmans to impose humiliation on their Hindu brethren. I hope that Hindus will prefer a life of penury outside Kohat but without humiliation, to a life of plenty in Kohat with humiliation. I hope that Mussalmans will be manly enough to refuse the bait offered by the Government and decline to be party to imposing humiliation on their Hindu brethren who are in a hopeless minority in Kohat. Whosoever the initial blunder and provocation, the fact stands that the Hindus were practically forced out of Kohat. It is up to the Mussalmans therefore to go to Rawalpindi and take the refugees back to Kohat with friendliness and with full guarantee for the safety of their lives and property. The Hindus outside Kohat should make it easy for the Mussalmans to make the approach. The Mussalmans outside should insist upon those in Kohat recognising their primary obligation to the Hindu minority. On a proper and honourable solution of this delicate problem lies in a large measure the success of the efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

The sooner we, both co-operators and non-co-operators, cease to rely upon Government protection against one another, the better it will be for us and the quicker and more lasting will be the solution. Viewed in that light, the indifference of the Kohat officials is to be welcomed. History would have been differently and more honourably written if the Hindus had not sought the protection of officials, had stuck to their homes and without offering any defence, or even in the act of forcibly defending themselves and their property and their

dependents had been reduced to cinders. I would welcome a resolution by the Government that no one need look to them for protection in inter-communal quarrels. If we would learn each party to defend itself against encroachment upon its liberty by the other, we would be well on the road to Swaraj. It would be a fine training in self-defence and self-respect or which is the same thing, Swaraj. There are two ways of defence. The best and the most effective is not to defend at all, but to remain at one's post risking every danger. The next best but equally honourable method is to strike bravely in self-defence and put one's life in the most dangerous positions. A few pitched battles between the two will soon teach them the uselessness of breaking one another's heads. It will teach them that to fight thus is not to serve God but to serve Satan.

I conclude this article by repeating the promise I made to the refugees \* in Rawalpindi. If they will not

\* Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of 20th November, 1924:

*Kohat Refugees.*—I have seen references in the press urging me immediately to go to Rawalpindi to meet the refugees from Kohat. I have also had messages to the same effect from them directly. I am extremely sorry that I am unable at the present moment to respond to the call. My health is not yet such as can bear the strain of continuous journey and I dare not postpone my visit to Bombay to attend the forthcoming Conference in connection with the Bengal repression. I hope, however, immediately on my return from Bombay to proceed to Rawalpindi. Meanwhile I wish to give my assurance to the refugees that they have never been out of my mind. As soon after the fast as I was able to move about a little I made all the preparations to proceed to Kohat. Had I been permitted it would have been my first duty to go there in the company of some Hindu and Mussalman friends. I felt that I could then have rendered useful service and in company with the friends contributed my humble share towards reconciliation between the Hindus and Mussalmans of Kohat. But my visit to Kohat having been prohibited, I did not feel that a visit to Rawalpindi would serve any useful purpose. I know too that many friends were assisting the refugees and that Pandit Malaviyaji was

return to Kohat till they receive cordial invitation from the Kohat Mussalmans, I shall be prepared as soon as the engagements already taken up are finished to go to Rawalpindi in company with Maulana Shaukat Ali and attempt to smooth the relations between the two or failing that to help them to find suitable occupation in life.

*12th February, 1925*

KOHAT HINDUS

BY M. K. GANDHI

I know that the pages of this week's *Young India* will be searched for the finding\* of Maulana Shaukat Ali

\* The statements of Mahatma Gandhi and Moulana Shaukat Ali were published in *Young India* of March 26th 1925. In his statement Mahatmaji ascribes the happenings at Kohat on September 9, 1924, to "the resentment felt by the Mussalmans over the resentment felt in their turn by the Hindus over the conversions (so called in my opinion) of Hindus—men and married women and consequent steps taken by them, the Hindus. The desire of the Parachas (Mussalman traders of Kohat) to oust the Hindus of Kohat was another. The resentment felt over the alleged abduction by Sirdar Makhan Singh's son of a married mussalman girl was the third." Mahatmaji also finds that while the pamphlet circulated by Mr. Jiwan Das, Secretary of the Sanathana Dharma Sabha, was offensive, the Hindus had made sufficient reparations for it subsequently. Mahatmaji finds that the

giving special attention to them and even though in obedience to the call from the refugees, as already stated, I shall go to Rawalpindi, I realise that beyond giving comfort to the refugees I might be of little service. This much, however, I shall venture to urge upon the attention of the refugees that the Kohat question is an All-India question. Both the Hindus and Mussalmans of India are interested in a proper, honourable and correct solution and settlement and they should be well advised before accepting any settlement to secure the approval of the Hindu and Mussalman leaders. Indeed I will venture respectfully to tender the same advice to the Government. I am glad to observe that they have denied the correctness of the terms said to have been offered by them. The Government have declared themselves in favour of unity. It would be an earnest of good faith if they would take the public into confidence and secure public approval of any terms of settlement that they might propose for the acceptance of the two communities.

and myself on the tragedy of last September. I am sorry to disappoint the curious. For Maulana Shaukat Ali is not with me and I must not publish anything without his first seeing it. I may, however, tell the reader that I have already discussed my impressions with Pundit Motilalji, then Pundit Malaviyaji and lastly with Hakim Saheb Ajmalkhan, Dr. Ansari and the Ali Brothers. And I have just finished writing them out during my journey to Sabarmati. My notes will be immediately forwarded to Maulana Shaukat Ali and I shall hope to publish them together with Maulana Shaukat Ali's endorsement, addition, or amendment as the case may be. But apart from the finding, I am in a position to reiterate my advice to the Hindus that in their place I should not return to Kohat unless there is an honourable peace with the Mussalmans without the Government intervention. This is not possible at the present moment. For unfortunately, the Muslim Working Committee which is at present guiding the Mussalmans of Kohat was not and would not be represented before us. I can appreciate the delicate

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Muslims had no excuse whatsoever for their furious onslaught on the Hindus on the 10th of September and the following days. As regards the Government, Mahatmaji says that in ignoring the repeated warnings given by the Hindus that Muslims were preparing for their sack and that their lives and property were in danger, "the authorities on the spot betrayed callous indifference, incompetence and weakness." He condemns the forced conversions of Hindus to Islam.

Moulana Shaukat Ali, in his statement, finds that the Hindus were as much responsible as the Mussalmans for the affair. The Hindus were clever and better educated and were growing in strength at the expense of the Muslims in Kohat. The officials, though not anxious that the Hindus should grow in strength, were taking special advantage of the situation to further emasculate the Muslims entry. He repudiates that there were forced conversions and finds that the removal of tuft and the use of Muslim caps by Hindus were intended by friendly Muslims to protect Hindus from Muslim mob fury.

position of the Hindus. They do not want to lose their property. The Maulana Saheb and I have failed to bring about peace. We have failed even to draw the principal Mussalmans for a discussion. Nor am I in a position to say that we should succeed in our attempt in the near future. In the circumstances the Hindus are at liberty to take any course they may consider advisable. In spite of our failure, I can only advise one course. 'Don't return till the Mussalmans take you to Kohat with self-respect and dignity.' But I know that this is cold comfort except for those who are able to stand on their own legs and are in need of no advice from any quarter whatsoever. Such is not the position of the Kohat refugees. I have conveyed my views to Pundit Malaviyaji. He has been their guide from the beginning and they must act as he advises them. Lalaji came to Pindi but he was unfortunately laid up in bed. My own considered opinion is given in the statement sent to Maulana Shaukat Ali. But I confess in advance that it will bring no solace to them. I am but a broken reed\* not worth relying upon.

But there is no hesitation about my advice regard-

\* The following appeared in *Young India* of January 21, 1926 :

*Still at it.*—The Secretary Khilafat Committee Nellore wires. "Nellore Hindu-Muslim tension, strained relations. Reactionary Hindus carrying procession with music before mosques against *mamool* (custom). Mahomedans decided cow-sacrifice. Situation serious. Pray intervention."

It flatters my vanity to be asked to intervene although I have repeatedly declared that I exercise no influence over the fighting elements whose star seems just now to be in the ascendant. But my vanity can avail nothing for the cause of peace. I can only suggest to the parties the sane and civilised method of arbitration. But if that does not please them, the Law of the stick is at their disposal.



ing what the refugees should do whilst they are outside Kohat. I cannot help remarking that it is demoralising for men and women who have strong arms and legs and who are otherwise physically fit, to subsist on charity. They must find out some occupation for themselves or with the aid of the local men. I have suggested carding, spinning and even weaving. But they may do any other useful work they choose or that may be chosen for them. The idea is that no person, man or woman, who is physically fit should live on charity. There must be always enough occupation in a well-ordered state for all who are willing to work. The refugees must be able to give a good account of every minute of their time whilst they are being supported by the nation. 'Idle hands some mischief still will ever find to do' is not a mere schoolboy rhyme. It contains a profound truth which can be verified by everyone for himself. Let there be no distinction between rich and poor, high and low. They are all bed-fellows in adversity. And the rich and the well-to-do should set an example to the others by labouring usefully even though they may not be drawing rations. What an incalculable good it must be to a nation whose members know an occupation which can stand them in good stead in distress. The refugees' life would have taken a nobler turn if they had all been spinners or carders or weavers. The refugee camp would then have presented the appearance of a busy hive and could have been kept up indefinitely. If the men do not decide to return at once, it is not yet too late to mend. It is a mistake to issue dry rations. It is no doubt less trouble to the committee of management but it means more waste and utter indiscipline among the refugees. They should place

themselves under soldiers' discipline keeping regular hours for rising, washing, praying, feeding, working and retiring. There is no reason why there should not be Ramayan readings or such other readings for them. All this requires thought, care, attention and diligence. Given these the calamity could be turned into a blessing in disguise.

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*11th December, 1924*

MY PUNJAB DIARY

BY M. K. GANDHI

*Not by Choice*

It was not by choice but by necessity that I undertook to preside at the Punjab Provincial Conference. The Punjabis wanted an outsider to preside and if at all possible Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Maulana Sahab however was unwilling. He said he would gladly attend but thought he would be more useful if he remained free. The Maulana's position was appreciated. Pandit Motilaji was then approached. He was good enough to say he would preside, if he was not prevented by any untoward event, and if Pandit Motilaji was prevented from presiding I was to fill in his place. Unfortunately the unexpected happened and Pandit Motilaji could not come. As the reasons given by him are of public importance, I set them forth in his own language.

*'Fed up'*

In his letter to Lalaji he says :—

“There has been serious misapprehension about my acceptance of the Presidentship of Punjab Provincial Conference. Mahatmaji and I had agreed in Bombay

that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the most suitable president, but that in case he could not be made to agree I was to take his place. I received news of the serious illness of my daughter-in-law and had to leave abruptly with an expert obstetrician. The Maulana Sahib came out of the meeting hall with me and I told him distinctly that my Punjab and Nagpure engagements were off and that he must preside at the Punjab Conference and fix some other date for Nagpur. I came away under the impression that he would consult Mahatmaji and fix upon some one else to preside if he himself was unwilling to do so. On arrival here we passed a most anxious day trying to save the new born baby, but the poor mite passed away. The daughter-in-law's condition was fairly good, but not entirely satisfactory as she had a temperature. In the course of these worries I got news from Calcutta of impending developments and was asked to be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

"As soon as Jawahar's wife was pronounced to be out of danger, I turned my attention to the communal situation in Allahabad and made up my mind to do what I could while waiting in Allahabad under orders from Calcutta. I found the situation to be as bad as it could be and was almost bombarded from all sides with bitter complaints at my continued absence from my own city and province. I assured them that I would give ample compensation by working for them for a whole fortnight.

"I set about immediately to make good this assurance. During my previous flying visits I had been thoroughly disgusted with the so-called leading Hindus and Mussalmans and decided to work on this occasion

from the bottom instead of at the top. I took up my old idea of organising a Hindu-Muslim Sangathan and giving it a start from Allahabad. The first step taken was to approach the University professors and students. We have a University Union here with a branch for social service. Both have a fairly large membership. At the meeting with the Professors it was decided to take steps to use the Social Service Branch as a nucleus for the Hindu-Muslim Sangathan. Accordingly two M.A. students, one Hindu and the other a Mussalman, both of proved impartiality in communal matters, are now engaged in registering members of the Sangathan from among the student class. Side by side with this every Muhallah is being similarly organised. From tomorrow I am to visit the Muhallahs personally and also speak to batches of students, who have been invited to Anand Bhawan at certain hours. After this preliminary work is done, I shall speak to the students generally and also address one or two public meetings. Time permitting I shall visit Lucknow and take similar steps there.

"You will see that the above programme involves solid work and wholly eliminates the show part, which unfortunately has come to be the only part of our public work in these days. To tell you the honest truth I am completely fed up with Conferences which are passing shows of the moment and invariably result in nothing substantial. The Nagpur disputes are ripe for decision and letters received from Nagpur show urgent necessity for the arbitrators (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and myself) meeting and deciding the dispute before the Belgaum Congress. I have sent two wires to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Calcutta proposing the 15th but have received no reply from him.

"I have written at this length to you to give you an accurate idea of the work I have laid out for myself and I hope you will agree that a visit to the Punjab at this juncture would not be as profitable."

I share to the fullest extent Panditji's horror of conferences. Not that they are always useless. They were absolutely necessary at a certain stage in our career. But they have in their present form almost outgrown their usefulness. Even when they do no other harm, they mean waste of money and time. The public spirit awakened by them needs to be consolidated into efficient work which can best be done by small committees. These latter to be useful must be harmonious and ever responsive to and by their solidly active work in touch with the general public. Abandonment of conferences should never be due to public apathy, but it should be because the public is more usefully engaged. For instance it would be folly to call people who are engaged in khaddar production to pass resolutions on subjects on which the public is known to be in agreement. It would be equally unwise to call away those who are, say, engaged in organising relief in famine-stricken areas. Panditji himself was more usefully employed in organising peace brigades in Allahabad. And if he succeeds in forming genuine Hindu-Muslim Sangathans, he will have done service of a first class order to the country. His decision to work from the bottom, instead of through middlemen, must result in nothing but better relations between Hindu and Mussalman masses.

### *My Real Business*

The Conference was an incidental business for me. My real work lay among representative Hindus and

Mussalmans. I had therefore no hesitation in appealing to the audience at the Khilafat Conference at Amritsar to suspend its sitting for the morning following till the afternoon of that day to enable the leaders there present to attend the informal meeting of representatives on the morning of the 8th. To my great joy the whole audience adopted my suggestion for the waiting. And Maulana Zafarali Khan, the President, Dr. Kitchlew and others with much inconvenience to themselves came to Lahore for the meeting.

### *The Result*

It is hardly necessary for me to inform the reader that the meeting was arranged for the sole purpose of considering the ways and means of easing the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans and of establishing real peace between the two communities. Among Mussalman outsiders, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan, the Ali Brothers and Dr. Ansari were present, and among Hindu outsiders Panditji Madan Mohan Malaviya was present. The discussion centred in the political causes of the tension. For they seemed to be the predominant if not the only causes of tension between the educated classes in the Punjab. Lalaji told me with great sorrow that whereas formerly there were cordial social relations between educated Mussalmans and educated Hindus, now there was growing estrangement. The meeting therefore discussed the advisability of revising the Lucknow Pact. The Punjab Mussalmans hold that we have outgrown the Lucknow Pact, if it was not a blunder in the very inception. They claim that whilst the communal feelings run high and mutual distrust exists,—

1. There should be communal representation on a.

population basis at least under a common electorate or separate if necessary.

There seemed to me to be general agreement among them that separate electorate should be resorted to only at the instance of minorities.

2. There should be no favoured treatment to any sect i.e. no sect should be represented above its numerical proportion.

3. The same formula should be applied to local bodies as to the legislative.

4. On all public services the different communities should be proportionately represented with due regard to efficiency. Wherever therefore any community is unrepresented, all future appointments, whether new or to fill up vacancies, should be so made as to regularise the proportionate representation. In other words there should be no class favouritism or class preference.

The Mussalman friends present made it clear that they merely gave their individual opinions. They did not bind anybody but themselves and their opinion was subject to revision if any other community claimed special or favoured treatment.

5. Any solution must be an all-India solution and must be by the consent of all-India.

The Sikh friends contended that their special position and importance in the Punjab required special treatment i.e. excessive representation if there was any communal representation at all in the Punjab. They said that they would be quite satisfied if communal representation was entirely given up and even if not one Sikh found place in the Legislature or elsewhere.

The Hindu position seemed to be that there should be no communal representation at all, but that if there

was to be any it should be under a joint electorate. The Hindu position was not crystallised. The Punjabi Hindus seemed to dread, at the back of the Mussalman demand, a sinister design on the part of the Mussalmans. In fact there is a vague fear in their minds that if the Mussalmans gain a decisive majority in the administration of the Punjab, the proximity of the warlike Mussalman tribes would constitute a most formidable menace to the Punjab in particular and to India in general.

Such is as briefly and as accurately as is possible for me to put, the real position of the respective communities. In these circumstances, it was not possible to press the advance to an immediate solution. I am hoping that at Belgaum there would be a more formal gathering of representatives to consider the whole position and to find an acceptable and national solution of the thorny problem.

### *The Conference*

There was nothing notable about the Conference save the fact that the delegates both at the Subjects Committee and at the Conference gave me the utmost assistance. Even those who disagreed with me extended the greatest forbearance. I single out this fact, because obedience to the authority of the chair is such an essential factor in the growth of a healthy public life. The greatest caution should no doubt be exercised in the choice of a chairman, but when one has been selected he must command implicit courtesy and obedience. The only way to deal with a refractory vacillating or partial chairman is to move, with becoming respect, a vote of no confidence and remove him from the chair. In well ordered society the honour is not to the person but to



the position. The fundamental distinction between personal rule and organised State is that in the latter the honour is rendered to the position which is a creation of the State *i. e.* the people; and thus the State goes on, no matter who is called to rule or preside. To put it in other words, every person in a well ordered State is fully conscious of both his responsibility and of his rights. The stability of a State depends upon the readiness of every citizen to subordinate his rights to those of the rest. He knows that the rights follow as a matter of course the performance of duty. The State is the sum-total of the sacrifice on its behalf of its members. But whilst I place on record my gratitude to the delegates for their courtesy and attention, I would like to mention that there is still at our meetings an unconscious lack of self-restraint. It is indispensable for meetings, public or private, that those who attend them do not all talk at once nor whisper to one another, but that they listen to what is being said. The whole value of meetings is lost if people are not attentive. The reader will recognise the seasonableness as well as the selfishness of these remarks. I want to prepare the ground for Belgaum. All those who attend the Congress and conferences at Belgaum, please note.

The Conference went through its work in seven hours on Sunday the 7th instant, 8 to 11 in the morning, and 4 to 8 in the evening. The Subjects Committee took six hours. The work was done expeditiously, because no time was lost waiting for anybody. The proceedings were started punctually at the appointed times so far as the Conference was concerned.

#### *The Convocation*

The previous day, *i. e.*, the 6th was devoted to the

meeting of the representatives, the inevitable but taxing procession, and the Convocation of the National University. Degrees were conferred upon the successful students, who recited the following oath in Hindusthani, which was administered by Lala Lajpat Rai in his capacity as Chancellor. 'I solemnly declare that I shall do nothing in my lifetime that would injure my religion or country.' Among the students who received their degree was one girl and one Mussalman. The ceremony was impressive, but I could not help feeling all the while I was awarding the diplomas that I was a square man in a round hole. My notions of education are so revolutionary and as must appear to my critics so crude. I can only think of national education in terms of Swaraj. Hence I would have even the collegiates devote their attention to perfecting themselves in the art of spinning and all it means. I would have them study the economics and implications of khaddar. They should know how long it takes to establish a mill and the capital required. They should know too the limitations on the possibility of an indefinite expansion of mills. They should know too the method of distribution of wealth through mills and that through hand spinning and hand weaving. They should know how hand spinning and the manufacture of Indian fabrics was destroyed. They should understand and be able to demonstrate the effect of the adoption of hand spinning in the cottages of the millions of India's peasants. They should know how a full revival of this cottage industry will weave into an undivided whole the sundered Hindu and Mussalman hearts. But these ideas are either behind the time or in advance of it. It does not much matter whether they are behind or ahead of the time. This I know that some

day or other the whole of educated India will adopt them.

*A Martial Law Prisoner*

The reader will recall the names of Messrs, Ratanchand and Bugga Chaudhry, the two martial law prisoners who were sentenced to be hanged and on whose behalf Pandit Motilalji took an appeal to the Privy Council. The reader will remember further that though the appeal was dismissed, the death sentences were commuted to life sentences. Now Mr. Bugga Chaudhry has been brought back from the Andamans to the Multan gaol whereas Mr. Ratanchand, I understand, is still kept in the Andamans. I had a visit from Mr. Bugga's mother-in-law. She informed me that Mr. Bugga has been long suffering from hernia and piles and for the last three months has been suffering from fever. During the palmy days of non-cooperation, I used to tell the relatives of these prisoners that they would be soon released. I felt sorry this time not to be able to hold out any hope to the mother-in-law of the early release of her son-in-law although he is ailing and has already served five years of imprisonment. In analysing the evidence given at the trial of these two gentlemen, I had expressed my conviction that there was nothing in it warranting conviction for murder. The Privy Council, it will be remembered, did not go into the merits of the cases. Their lordships threw out the appeal on what may be called technical grounds.

5th February, 1925

## ON ANOTHER'S LAND

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend says, "you ask us at every turn to yield to Mussalmans, you ask us not to resort to law courts on any account. Have you fully considered the consequences of what you are saying? Have you taken into account human nature? What are we to do when mosques are being put up on our ground without our permission? What are we to do when unscrupulous men bring suits against us for monies we do not owe or when they actually rob us of our possessions? In giving your answers you must take our poor selves into consideration. You dare not say you do not know us. Or if you give your *fatwas* in utter obliviousness of us, you must not blame us if we do not respond to your counsels of perfection. Let me tell you that you are sometimes impossible." I sympathise with the friends who talk to me in this strain. I am prepared to recognise the limitations of human nature for the very simple reason that I recognise my own. But precisely as recognising my own limitations, I do not deceive myself by refusing to distinguish between what I ought to do and what I fail to do. I must not deceive others by refusing to notice the same distinction and telling them that what they propose to do is not only perhaps defensible but also right. Many things are impossible and yet are the only things right. A reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct. Whoever thought it possible before Edison to speak to people hundreds of

miles away from us? Marconi went a step further and made wireless communication possible. We are daily witnessing the phenomenon of the impossible of yesterday becoming the possible of today. As in physical science so in psychological.

Now for the concrete questions. The question of mosques built on another's land without his permission is incredibly simple. If A is in possession of his land and some one comes to build something on it, be it even a mosque, A has the right at the first opportunity of pulling down the structure. Any building of the shape of a mosque is not a mosque. A building to be a mosque must be duly consecrated. A building put up on another's land without his permission is a pure robbery. Robbery cannot be consecrated. If A has not the will or the capacity to destroy the building miscalled mosque, he has the right of going to a law court to have the building pulled-down. Law courts are forbidden to convince non-co-operators but not to those who require such conviction. Moreover full non-co-operation we have never practised. A practice has a flaw in it when it is not only inconvenient but clearly defeats the end it was designed to serve. So long as I own property I must defend it whether by the force of law courts or by the force of my own strong arms. The act is in essence the same. Our national non-co-operation is or was with a system. It presupposed co-operation among ourselves in a general way. But when we non-co-operate among ourselves, national non-cooperation is a mirage. Individual non-cooperation is possible when we own not a clod of earth. It is possible only for a *Sunyasini*. The highest fulfilment of religion therefore requires a giving up of all possession. Having ascertained the

law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way. When a robber comes to take away A's property he can deliver the property to him, if he recognises in him a blood brother. If he does not feel like one but dreads the robber and would wish that some one was near to knock him down, he must try to knock him down and take the consequence. If he has the desire but not the ability to fight the robber, he must allow himself to be robbed and then call in the assistance of law courts to regain the lost property. In both the cases he has as good a chance of losing his property as of regaining it. If he is a sane man like me, he would reach with me the conclusion that to be really happy he must not own anything or own things only so long as his neighbours permit him. In the last resort we live not by our physical strength but by sufferance. Hence the necessity of uttermost humility and absolute reliance on God. This is living by soul force. This is highest self-expression.

Let us bear the law in mind not as an academic and attractive proposition when it is written on paper but as the law of our being to be continually realised and let us fashion our practice in accordance with the law and the measure of our ability to live up to it.

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*19th February, 1925*

## HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :

"You have entertained in the columns of *Young India* an attempt made by one of your correspondents to show up the

shibboleth of the Muslims' extreme backwardness in education. That emboldens me, if you will permit an humble worker in the country's cause, to put before you one more of these shibboleths which has been ruling our political life for long, but which is palpably more absurd than the one as regards Muslim backwardness to which I am glad your attention has at last been drawn.

"The Muslims are a minority in India.' How often is such a statement made, and how many times more is it tacitly assumed in political argument! But are they really a minority? Even taking one sect of them, viz. the Sunni Hanafi, for comparison, do we not find that it is numerically stronger by far than *any* single community amongst the Hindus, or even than each of the other religious groups in India, as the Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, Jains, Jews and Buddhists? And is it not the case that the Hindus are divided into communities and sects which are in most cases farther apart from one another socially than the Muslims are from the Non-Muslims? Then, what about the Hindu Untouchables? Is not their number equal to, if not greater than, that of the Muslim 'minority'? If Muslims as 'a minority' in India may claim separate and special treatment, protection and guarantees, how much stronger must the claim of this untouchable section of Hindus be allowed to be, since they not only are by their numbers as important a 'minority'—and a claimant one too, since the date of the Lucknow Pact,—but have been suffering for ages from *actual present disabilities* with which no Muslim or any other touchable minority's *apprehensions for the future* may possibly bear comparison? As witness, the Vaikom Satyagraha, the Palghat dispute, the Bombay 'lynchers'. I leave alone the innumerable backward castes and the aborigines so far reckoned within the Hindu fold. Are the Muslims then the minority?"

The italics and the black types are the writer's. I have given the letter for its undoubted earnestness. And yet to me, an observer untouched, I hope, by any bias one way or the other, the reasoning appears to be specious when it is used to demonstrate that the Mussalmans are not a minority in India. The writer

forgets that the claim is that of all Mussalmans against all Hindus. The latter cannot both have the cake and eat it. Though divided among themselves, the Hindus do present a more or less united front not only to the Mussalmans but to all non-Hindus, even as the Mussalmans though divided among themselves present naturally a united front to all non-Muslims. We shall never solve the question by ignoring facts or re-arranging them to suit our plans. The facts are that the Mussalmans are seven crores against twentytwo crores of Hindus. The latter have never denied it. Let us also know the issues. A minority does not always fear a majority because it is a majority. The Mussalmans fear the Hindu Majority because the Hindus, they say, have not always treated them with justice, have not respected their religious prejudices and because, they say, the Hindus are superior to them in education and wealth. Whether these are facts or not is irrelevant for our purpose. It is enough that Mussalmans believe them and therefore are afraid of the Hindu majority. The Mussalmans expect to meet this fear only partially by means of separate electorates and special representation even in excess of their numbers in some cases. The Hindus admit the Mussalman minority but deny the Mussalman charge of injustice. This must therefore be verified. I have not known Hindus to deny the statement that they are superior to Mussalmans in education and wealth.

The Hindus on their part fear the Mussalmans because they (the Hindus) say that Mussalmans whenever they have held power have treated them with great harshness and contend that though they were in a majority they were *non plussed* by a handful of



Mussalman invaders, that the danger of a repetition of the experience is ever present before the Hindus, and that in spite of the sincerity of the leading Mussalmans the Mussalman masses are bound to make common cause with any Mussalman adventurer. The Hindus therefore reject the plea of weakness on the part of the Mussalmans and refuse to entertain the idea of extending the doctrine of the Lucknow pact. It is again beside the question whether the Hindu fear is justified. The fear is a fact to be reckoned with. It would be wrong to impute motives to any community or leaders. To distrust Malaviyaji or Mian Fazl-i-Hussain is to postpone a proper solution. Both honestly state what they feel. Wisdom lies therefore in brushing aside all side issues and facing the situation as it is, not as we would like it to be.

In my opinion therefore the writer has tried, be it ever so unconsciously, to overprove his case. He is right in saying that Hindus are divided into many antagonistic sects or parties each setting up a claim for separate treatment. He is right also in stating that the untouchables have even a stronger case than that Mussalmans for separate representation. The writer has made out a case not against the fact of Mussalman minority but against communal representation and separate electorates. He has shown that any extension of the doctrine of the Lucknow pact must inevitably lead to communal representation for innumerable sub-castes and other denominations, thus indefinitely postponing the early advent of Swaraj.

To extend the Lucknow pact doctrine or even to retain it is fraught with danger. To ignore the Mussalman grievance as if it was not felt is also to postpone Swaraj.

Lovers of Swaraj cannot therefore rest till a solution is found which would allay Mussalman apprehensions and yet not endanger Swaraj. Such a solution is not impossible.

Here is one.

In my opinion the Mussalman claim for majority in Bengal and the Punjab in accordance with their numbers is irresistible. That claim cannot be resisted for the fear from the North or the North West. Hindus, if they want Swaraj, must take the chance. So long as we fear the outside world, we must cease to think of Swaraj. But Swaraj we must have. I would therefore rule out the Hindu fear in considering the just claim of the Mussalmans. We must dare to do justice even at the cost of future safety.

What the Mussalmans want is not separate electorate for its own sake but they want their own real representatives to be sent to the legislatures and other elective bodies. This can be done by private arrangement rather than legal imposition. There is flexibility about private arrangement. A legal imposition tends to become more and more rigid. Private arrangement will continually test the honour and good faith of each party. Legal imposition avoids the necessity of honour or good faith. Private arrangement means a domestic settlement of domestic quarrels and a solid wall of united opposition against a common enemy—the foreign rule. I am told that the law prevents the working of the private arrangement I have in view. If it is so, we must seek to remove the legal obstacle and not create and add a new one. My plan therefore is to do away with separate electorates but secure the election of the desired and agreed number of Mussalman and other

candidates in a given constituency under a joint ticket, Mussalman candidates to be nominated by previously known Mussalman associations. I need not enter into the question of representation in excess of numbers at the present stage. It can be considered and all difficulties in that direction can be met when the principle of private arrangement is accepted by all.

No doubt my proposal presupposes a sincere desire on the part of all concerned to reach a solution in terms of Swaraj. If communalism is the goal, then any private arrangement must break down. If, however, Swaraj is the goal and the parties approach the question purely from a national standpoint, there need be no fear of a breakdown. On the contrary every party will be interested in its faithful working.

What the law should, however, provide is a just franchise whereby every community can have, if it wishes, voters on the roll in proportion to its numbers. Our voters' rolls should answer the number of representatives in proportion to its population. But that question requires a critical examination of the working of the existing franchise. For me the existing franchise is wholly untenable for any Swaraj scheme.

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*26th February, 1925*

THE EMBARGO

BY M. K. GANDHI

I publish the following telegraphic correspondence between the Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy and myself:

*Telegram to the Private Secretary  
To the Viceroy*

10-2-25

"Does His Excellency now consider it possible to permit me and my colleagues to visit Kohat during beginning March."

*Reply to the above*

13-2-25

"His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to thank you for your telegram and the courtesy that prompted it. His Excellency would have been glad to be able to fall in with your wishes. But his attention has been called to the advice you have just given in *Young India* to the Kohat Hindus not to return to Kohat unless the Muslims make honourable peace with them without Government intervention. The only construction His Excellency can put on this article is that if you went to Kohat your influence would be directed towards the breakdown of the recent settlement, the effecting of which was a matter of great concern to His Excellency and from which he hopes and believes an enduring reconciliation will spring. His Excellency is sure therefore that you yourself will appreciate how impossible it is for him to fall in with your wishes."

*Second Telegram to the Private Secretary  
To the Viceroy*

19-2-25

"Thanks telegram. In *Young India* mentioned your telegram I have stated ideal, but have no desire to disturb withdrawal prosecution. My purpose is to establish real peace which I hold is almost impossible with Government intervention or better still without private and spontaneous effort. Intervention of my friends and self can only assist Government effort so far as it promotes substantial peace. Please reply Sabarmati."

*Reply to the above*

22-2-25

"His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram. The agreement which has now been laboriously reached was only possible with the spontaneous help of private persons of both com-

munities. It is of course of the nature of a compromise between the two communities and any alteration in its terms would upset the whole settlement. Moreover it is only on the basis of this settlement that His Excellency consented after much heart-searching to a withdrawal of prosecutions. While, therefore, His Excellency appreciates that your own desire is also for peace, he feels that your proposed visit would lead to a reopening of the case and therefore however much he may regret it, he must abide by the previous decision."

It is quite true that my going to Kohat is likely to reopen the settlement in so far as it is intrinsically bad. It is a settlement brought about by coercion, for it has been arrived at under threat of prosecutions on either side. It is not a voluntary settlement that pleases the parties. Both the Hindus and the Mussalmans whom Maulana Shaukat Ali and I met at Rawalpindi said as much. But my visit to Kohat whatever else it may or may not bring about can never mean greater estrangement between the parties. If, therefore, I had been permitted together with Mussalman friends to proceed to Kohat it would have meant furtherance of peace which the Viceroy claims to have at heart equally with me. Whilst, therefore, I was able somewhat to understand the refusal when the things were still in a ferment, I am unable to understand the prohibition at the present moment. Friends were not wanting who suggested that I should have proceeded to Kohat without permission or intimation and taken the risk of a prohibition order. I could not do so unless I meant to disobey any such order and court imprisonment. And as I hold that there is no atmosphere at the present moment in the country for any such step I could not take the proposed risk. I can only hope that the authorities will appreciate the deliberation with which I am avoiding every step

that may precipitate civil resistance. My purpose so far as it is humanly possible is to avoid taking a single step that may even indirectly precipitate violence on the part of the people. But a time must come when non-violent resistance on my part may become a duty in total disregard of untoward consequences. I do not myself know when such a time can or will come. I know that it is a possibility. But when that time comes I hope that friends will not find me wanting. Till then I must ask them to bear with me.

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5th March, 1935

## MY CRIME

By M. K. GANDHI

I gladly print the following from Maulana Zafar Ali Khan written by him in his capacity as President of the Punjab Khilafat Committee.

"I have read with feelings of mingled amazement and pain your pronouncement, in *Young India* of the 26th instant, on stoning incidents in Kabul. You say that 'this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the *Quran*. You, moreover, declare that 'every formula of every religion has in this age of reason to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent.' Finally you maintain that 'error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world'.

"I have always paid unstinted homage to your greatness and have all along looked upon you as one of the few men who are making modern history; but I would be failing in my duty as a Mussalman if I refrained from pointing out to you that by challenging the right of the *Quran* to regulate the life of its followers in its own way you have shaken the belief of millions of your Muslim admirers in your capacity to lead them.

"You are at perfect liberty to express your opinion one way or the other as to whether renegades can be stoned to death under the law of Islam. But to hold that even if the *Quran* supported such form of penalty, it should be condemned outright as an error, is a form of reasoning which cannot appeal to the Mussalmans.

"Error is after all a relative term and Mussalmans have their own way of interpreting it. To them the *Quran* is an unalterable law which transcends the ever changing policies and expedencies of puny humanity. Would to God that to your multifarious activities as leader of India you had not added the rather delicate task of adversely criticising the teachings of the *Holy Quran*."

The Maulana has put an interpretation upon my note which it does not bear. I have not 'adversely (or otherwise) criticised the teachings of the *Holy Quran*. But I have criticised the teachers, that is, the interpreters, in anticipation of their defending the penalty of stoning to death. I claim to understand enough of the *Quran* and the History of Islam to know that a multitude of interpreters have interpreted the *Quran* to suit their preconceived notions. My purpose was to issue a warning against the acceptance of such interpretations. But I would like to say that even the teachings themselves of the *Quran* cannot be exempt from criticism. Every true scripture only gains by criticism. After all we have no other guide but our reason to tell us what may be regarded as revealed and what may not be. The early Mussalmans accepted Islam not because they knew it to be revealed but because it appealed to their virgin reason. I fully endorse the Maulana's statement that error is a relative term. But we know as a matter of fact that some things are universally accepted as errors. Death by torture is I expect such an error. In making the three statements the Maulana has quoted, I have simply mentioned three canons of interpretation

which I think are incapable of challenge. Any way, I abide by them. And if I am at perfect liberty to express my opinion 'as to whether renegades can be stoned to death under the law of Islam' why may I not express an opinion as to whether penalty of stoning to death can be imposed at all under the law of Islam? The Maulana has betrayed intolerance of criticism by a non-Muslim of anything relating to Islam. I suggest to him that intolerance of criticism even of what one may prize as dear as life itself is not conducive to the growth of public corporate life. Surely Islam has nothing to fear from criticism even if it be unreasonable. I therefore suggest to the Maulana the advisability in the light of my criticism of applying himself to an elucidation of the tremendous issues involved in the incidents reported from Kabul.

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*2nd April, 1925.*

## CONUNDRUMS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A Mussalman lawyer handed me the following questions for answer. I am omitting from two questions argumentative matter :

" How far do you approve of the contention of Muslims like Mr. Jinnah and his school of thought that the Indian National Congress which has a large Hindu majority in it cannot adequately and justly represent and safeguard the interests of the Muslim minority and that therefore a separate and communal organisation like the Muslim League is absolutely necessary?"

I do not agree with the contention imputed to Mr. Jinnah. In my opinion the Congress has from its birth gone out of its way to solicit Mussalman cooperation,



even patronage. The existence of the League must therefore be justified on other grounds.

"How far do you give countenance to the contention of eminent Hindus like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and their school of thought that the same Indian National Congress, although it consists of a large Hindu majority, cannot also be taken to represent and safeguard the interests of the Hindu community, and that therefore separate and communal organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sangathan are absolutely necessary and essential to protect Hindu interests?"

I do not think that the Congress has failed to represent the Hindu interest in so far as it was consistent with the national interest, i. e. the interests of all communities considered as one nation. The existence therefore of the Hindu Mahasabha, too, must be justified on other grounds. It is obvious that the Congress cannot represent mutually antagonistic interests. Its existence presupposes mutuality of interest and effort.

"What is your honest belief and conviction as to the real cause, whether remote or immediate, of the frequent riots and differences between Mussalmans and Hindus in North India and of their absence or infrequency in South India?"

I can only guess and my guess is that the two communities quarrel more frequently in the North because they are more equally balanced than in the South. Where riots do take place, they occur because both think communally and because either fears and distrusts the other and because neither has the courage or the foresight to forego the present for the sake of the future, or the communal interests for the sake of the national.

"Do you really hope to solve the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity placing as you do reliance upon the present day orthodox Ulema of the Theological School of Deoband and of the Jamiat-ul-

Ulema-i Hind, who condemn in season and out of season as *kafirs* infidels, apostates, and as deserving of no other punishment than being stoned to death, a considerable section of the Muslim community, popularly known as Qadianies, Mrinais, or better as Ahmedi-ahs, or will you seek assistance for the solution of the mighty problem from the Ahmedi-ah community who seem really to hold the key to the situation, and who have already solved the question of Hindu-Muslim unity by their writings and their conduct?"

I must woo the orthodox Ulema as well as the Ahmedi-ah community. It is impossible, even if it were desirable to disregard the 'Orthodox-Ulema.' What one must, however, do is not to truckle to any person or party. Having fixed one's minimum from which one may not recede, one may stoop to conquer the whole world.

"Have you ever inquired as to why, while the Muslim community in India as a whole is so keenly interested in the affairs of Muslim countries abroad, not the least appreciable proportion of it takes any active interest in the internal political life and advancement of the country and especially in the Presidency of Madras?"

In so far as the charge is correct, the Mussalmans take less interest because they do not yet regard India as their home of which they must feel proud. Many regard themselves, quite wrongly, I think, as belonging to a race of conquerors. We Hindus are in a measure to blame for this aloofness on the part of the Mussalmans. We have not come to regard them as an integral part of the nation. We have not set out to win their hearts. The causes for this unfortunate state of things are historic and were in their origin inevitable. The blame of the Hindu therefore can be felt only now. The consciousness being of recent growth is naturally not universal and the physical fear of the Mussalmans in a vast number of cases makes it constitutionally difficult for the Hindus to adopt the blame and proceed

to win the Mussalman heart. But I must own to the reader that I no longer regard myself as an expert on the Hindu Muslim question. My opinion has therefore only an academic value. I still hold to my own view even though I admit that I have found it difficult to make it acceptable to either party.

“What is your remedy for the unfortunate turn the politics of this country have ever since taken, viz., that while politics and political life in this country have from the beginning attracted successfully only a few of the rich and well-to-do classes, it has become almost an impossible thing for men of the middle and the poor classes to lead anything like an active and successful political life in this country, especially during the last four years?”

The politics have taken no unfortunate turn. We are passing through a necessary stage. The immense self-consciousness among the poorer classes has upset old calculations and formulae. We have not yet adjusted ourselves to the new state of things. But I see signs everywhere of settling down to the new order of things. Taking even the Hindu-Muslim disturbances in that light, I do not despair of the future. Order must come out of the present chaos. We would expedite the advent of order by watching, waiting and praying. If we do so, the evil that has come to the surface will disappear much quicker than if in our haste and impatience we would disturb the surface and thus send the dirt to the bottom again instead of allowing it to throw itself out.

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30th April, 1925

## INTER-DINING AGAIN

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :

" You have answered at length an Englishman's 'puzzle' on the question of inter-marriage. But what about inter-dining which is a much less vital affair but more frequent in life? Suppose some men of good-will organise, as one means of promoting goodwill amongst all classes, an inter-caste, inter-communal and international dinner on purely vegetarian and non-alcoholic lines; would you from your own *Sanatan* point of view object, if any Hindu—say, some members of your caste or of your own family—wished to join that dinner on invitation (and not of course on compulsion!) and asked your opinion on it? Similarly, may a Brahman with *your* view of the *Sanatan* (or *maryada*) *dharma* accept a clean dish of rice and a pure cup of water which a *chandal* or a Mussalman or a Christian has offered him (and not of course forced on him), finding the Brahman wayworn, hungry and thirsty (and almost on the point of fainting, let us say) in a lone wild place? In fine the question is: Does such a demonstration of goodwill as the 'cosmopolitan' dinner or the offer of a dish by a supposed untouchable to a touchable Hindu and acceptance thereof square with your idea of the *Sanatan* or *Varnashram dharma* or *Mur-yada dharma* or does it not?"

If a Brahmin is in distress he would take, if he wishes to hold on to his body, clean food by whomsoever offered. I would neither object to nor advocate participation in an inter-national or cosmopolitan dinner, for the simple reason that such functions do not necessarily promote friendship or goodwill. It is possible today to organise a dinner party between Hindus and Mussalmans but I dare to say that such a dinner will no more bring the two communities together than the absence of it keeps them apart. I have known deadly enemies dine and chat together heartily and yet remain enemies. Where will the correspondent draw

the line! Why does he stop at vegetarian and non-alcoholic meals? A man who regards flesh-eating a virtue and wine bibbing a harmless and pleasurable refreshment, will see nothing but promotion of goodwill in dividing with the world his beef steak and exchanging with it the sparkling cup? On the argument underlying the correspondent's query, there can be no dividing line. I therefore rule out inter-dining as the means of promoting goodwill. Whilst I do not myself observe these restrictions and take food that I do not regard as forbidden at the hands of anyone so long as it is cleanly dressed, I respect the scruples of those who observe the restrictions. Nor do I pat myself on the back for my 'liberal' practice as against the others' 'narrowness'. I may be narrow and selfish in spite of my apparently liberal practice and my friend may be liberal and unselfish notwithstanding his apparently narrow practice. Merit or demerit lies in the motive. Insistence upon inter-dining as part of the programme of promotion of fellowship in my opinion retards the growth of goodwill by raising false issues and even false hope. What I am trying to remove is the idea of pollution and superiority. These self-imposed restrictions have a sanitary as also a spiritual value. But non-observance no more dooms a man to perdition than its observance raises him to the seventh heaven. A man who observes the dining restrictions in a most punctilious manner may be a veritable blackguard fit to be shunned by society, and a cosmopolitan omnivorous man may be one ever walking in the fear of God whose society it would be a privilege to cultivate.

*9th July, 1925*

## THE SCIENCE OF SURRENDER

BY M. K. GANDHI

Exception has been taken to my remarks at a meeting in Calcutta that Deshabandhu in his relations with the Mussalmans brought 'the science of surrender to perfection.' The exception has been taken because my critics impute to me the implication that by surrender I mean that Deshabandhu conferred on Mussalmans favours, that is, things they were not entitled to. The critics opine that the Hindus are acting towards the Mussalmans much the same as Englishmen are acting towards us all having first taken away everything and then offering us doles in the name of favours.

I know what I said at the meeting in question. I have not read the reports of my speech but I desire to abide by all I said at that meeting. I make bold to say that without mutual surrender there is no hope for this distraught country. Let us not be hyper-sensitive or devoid of imagination. To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wishes to give because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left. It is libellous to say that Hindus act like Englishmen. Hindus cannot even if they would, and this I say in spite of the brutality of the labourers of Kidderpore. Both Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. Both are fallen. And they are in the position of lovers, have to be, whether they will or no. Every act, therefore, of a

Hindu towards the Mussalman and *vice versa* must be an act of surrender and not mere justice. They may not weigh their acts in golden scales and exact consideration. Each has to regard himself ever a debtor of the other. By justice why should not a Mussalman kill a cow every day in front of me? But his love for me restrains him from so doing and he goes out of his way some times even to refrain from eating beef for his love of me, and yet thinks that he has done only just what is right. Justice permits me to shout my music in the ear of Maulana Mahomed Ali when he is at prayer but I go out of my way to anticipate his feelings and make my talks whispers whilst he is praying and still consider that I have conferred no favour on the Maulana. On the other hand, I should become a loathsome creature if I exercised my just right of playing tomtom precisely at the time of his prayer. Justice might have been satisfied if Deshabandhu Das had not filled certain posts with Mussalmans, but he went out of his way to anticipate Mussalman wishes and placate Mussalman sentiment. It was his sensitiveness to placate them that hastened his death. For I know what a shock it was to him to learn that law, *i. e.* justice would compel him to disinter certain remains buried in unauthorised ground and he was trying to find out means of avoiding any the slightest offence to Muslim sentiment even though it may be unreasonable. This was all going out of the way—not his way but the way of the world. And yet he never considered that he was conferring any favour on the Mussalmans by delicately considering their feelings. Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself.

This talk, therefore, of justice and nothing but justice.

is a thoughtless, angry and ignorant outburst whether it comes from Hindus or Mussalmans. So long as Hindus and Mussalmans continue to prate about justice they will never come together. 'Might is right' is the last word of 'justice and nothing but justice'. Why should Englishmen surrender an inch of what they have earned by right of conquest? Or why should Indians when they come to power not make the English disgorge everything which their ancestors robbed them of? And yet when we come to a settlement, as we shall some day, we will not weigh in the scales of justice so-called. But we shall introduce into the calculation the disturbing factor of surrender otherwise called love or affection or fellow-feeling. And so will it be with us Hindus and Mussalmans when we have sufficiently broken one another's heads and spilled a few gallons of innocent blood and realised our foolishness. The scales will then fall off our eyes and we shall recognise that vengeance was not the law of friendship; not justice but surrender and nothing but surrender was the law of friendship. Hindus will have to learn to bear the sight of cow-slaughter and the Mussalmans will have to discover that it was against the law of Islam to kill a cow in order to wound the susceptibilities of Hindus. When that happy day arrives we shall know only each other's virtues. Our vices will not obtrude themselves upon our gaze. That day may be far off or it may be very near. I feel it coming soon. I shall work for that end and no other.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add by way of caution that my surrender does not mean surrender of principle. I made the point clear at the meeting and I wish to emphasise it here once more. But what we are



just now fighting for is not any principle at all but vanity and prejudice. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

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*22nd October, 1925*

### THAT ETERNAL QUESTION

By M. K. GANDHI

However much I may wish to avoid it the Hindu-Muslim question will not avoid me. Muslim friends insist upon my intervention to solve it. The Hindu friends would have me discuss it with them and some of them say I have sown the wind and must reap the whirlwind. Whilst I was in Calcutta a Bihar friend had written to me in grief and anger telling me of the alleged kidnapping of Hindu boys and specially girls. I had written to him telling him point blank that I did not believe those allegations but that if he had proof and gave it to me I would gladly examine it and if I was satisfied I would denounce it although I might not be able to do any tangible good. Since then I have had cuttings from newspapers describing in harrowing detail cases of kidnapping. I had told the friend that newspaper extracts could not be accepted as any evidence of the crime, that in many cases newspaper paragraphs were inflammatory, misleading and often absolutely false. There are Hindu and Muslim sheets that delight in blackguarding Mussalmans and Hindus respectively and if both of them could be accepted as true both the parties were loathsome creatures. But I have proved to my own satisfaction that many of these reported cases are highly exaggerated if they are not false. I

have therefore, asked for such incontestable proofs as would be accepted in any court of law. The Titagarh case is certainly such a one. A Hindu girl had been kidnapped. She is supposed to have embraced Islam and in spite of the court's order she has not been yet produced so far as I am aware. What is more, respectable people are concerned in the non-production of the girl. When I was in Titagarh nobody seemed prepared to shoulder the responsibility about the girl. At Patna too some startling information was given to me with corroborative evidence. I refrain at the present moment from going into it because it is not before me in its completed form. Such cases set one athinking and need the attention of all well-wishers of the country. There is then the question of music in front of mosques. I have heard of a peremptory demand for total cessation of music, soft or loud, at any time whatsoever in front of mosques. There is too a demand for the stopping of *arati* during prayer hours in temples in the neighbourhood of mosques. I heard in Calcutta that even boys passing by a mosque early in the morning and reciting *Rammam* were stopped.

What is to be done. Recourse to law courts in such matters is a broken reed. If I allow my daughter to be kidnapped and then go to court for protection the latter would be powerless or if the judge got angry over my cowardice he would dismiss me from his presence with deserved contempt. Courts deal with ordinary crimes. General kidnapping of girls or boys is not an ordinary crime. People in such cases are expected to look after themselves. Courts help those who are largely able to help themselves. Theirs is supplementary protection. So long as there are weak people so

long will there be some one to prey upon their weakness. The remedy therefore lies in organising for self-defence. I could find it in me to justify the most violent defence in such cases unless the people concerned are capable of a non-violent defence. No doubt where girls or boys of poor and helpless parents are kidnapped, the case becomes much more complicated. There the remedy has to be found not by the individual but by a whole clan or caste. A presentation, however, of authentic cases of kidnapping is a prime necessity before public opinion can be well organised.

The question of music is much simpler than that of kidnapping. Either continuous music, *arati* or the repeating of *Ramnam* is a religious necessity or it is not. If it is a religious necessity no prohibition order by a court of law can be held obligatory. Music must be played, *arati* must be made and *Ramnam* repeated, cost what it may. If my formula were accepted a procession of the meekest men and women, unarmed even with *lathis* would march with *Ramnam* on their lips, supposing that that was the bone of contention and draw down on their heads the whole of the Mussalman wrath. But if they would not accept that formula they would still proceed with the sacred name on their lips and fight every inch of the ground. But to stop music for fear of a row or because of an order of court is to deny one's religion.

But then there is the other side to the question. Is continuous playing of music even while passing mosques at prayer time always a religious necessity? Is repeating of *Ramnam* a similar necessity? What about the charge that the fashion nowadays is to organise processions purely for the sake of irritating Mussalmans and to

make *arati* just at the time of prayer and to utter *Ram-nam* not because it is held religiously necessary but in order to create an occasion for a fight? If such be the case it will defeat its own end and naturally the zest being wanting, a court's order, a military display or a shower of brick-bats would end the irreligious show.

A religious necessity must therefore be clearly established. Every semblance of irritation must be avoided. A mutual understanding should be sincerely sought. And where it is not possible, an irreducible minimum should be fixed making due allowance for the opposite sentiment and then without seeking the intervention of courts or in spite of a prohibition order a fight must be put up for that minimum. Let no one charge me with ever having advised or encouraged weakness or surrender on matters of principle. But I have said, as I say again, that every trifle must not be dignified into a principle.

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*August 19th, 1926*

“ THE ORDER OF HINDU MUSLIM UNITY ”

BY M. K. GANDHI

Begum Mohamed Zahiuddin Meccai recently delivered an address before the Women's Sarada Association at Bangalore. A correspondent has favoured me with a copy of her interesting speech from which I take the following:—

“ There was no form of social service so sacred a service in the cause of Hindu Muslim Unity, tending as it does, to the good, not merely of Mother India, but of humanity itself. Nothing could be more sinful than to sow discord and hatred between these two important sections of the Indian community.

“They could understand the meaning of these degrading and disgraceful riots, if the God of the Hindus was distinct and separate from the God of the Mussalmans which however was not the case. They both worshipped one and the same God, and yet were ready to be led astray, and destroy each other in the name of that very God, for the sake of a petty matter like music before the mosque!

“A great Sufi saint had sung, addressing the Almighty thus: ‘The Hindu had tried and found Thee in his Image, the Zoroastrian is singing Thy praise over his sacred Fire. Even the unbeliever had identified Thee with Nature. But none has till now been able to deny Thy existence!’ It was thus foolish, if not mad, for the Hindus and the Mussalmans to fight as they were doing. It must be known that Islam has come on a mission of *PEACE* and *PROGRESS*, and not of war. It recognises all the Prophets and Messengers of God. It is the one religion that has put into actual practice the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man, and has taken all mankind into its purview, and described them as forming the limbs of a single body, which is rendered uneasy even if a single distant limb is in trouble, pain or agony. Every true Muslim should feel, and does feel, disgraced, at any act of a Muslim, in any part of the world, which is against these sacred principles.

“The sacred Hindu scripture inculcates the very same principles, and Hindu Dharma enjoins their practice and observance. The Hindus and the Muslims should therefore organise themselves not in *self-defence*, which is too low an ideal, degenerating into aggression, intolerance and provocative conduct, but to prevent the violation of the high principles of their respective Dharmas by their own co-religionists attacking or molesting the members of the other community. Let henceforward be instituted the *Sacred Order of Hindu Muslim Unity* and let Hindus and Muslims, men and women, enrol themselves, as members, so that at the first sign of trouble the Mussalmans may think not of their own families and their mosques, but of their Hindu brethren and their temples, so as to save them, even at the sacrifice of their own lives from the attacks of misguided Muslims, and *vice versa*. Let every Indian mother see that her children dedicate themselves to this sacred cause, and the

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President was sanguine that this difficult problem would be solved, and the so-called leaders and protectors of communal interests would find their occupation gone."

The sentiments are admirable but their seems to be no atmosphere for the formation of the Order suggested by the worthy lady.

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NON-CO-OPERATION  
CONGRESS AND SWARAJ





17th April, 1924

## SCHOOL MASTERS AND LAWYERS

BY M. K. GANDHI

"I hope you have by this time been able to consult friends who were led to modify, at Delhi, the Congress resolution regarding the Triple Boycott. What final decision have you come to? Are you going to preach them over again in the same form?"

"As to the boycott of Councils, I may not say anything; the leaders of the Swaraj Party might have clearly laid before you facts and arguments. The work they are doing and are likely to do is before you. As to the boycott of schools and colleges, it has, if I may say from my own experience, completely failed. I may refer to my own case. Here there are two full-fledged High schools, attended by more than 500 pupils each, while the National High school has barely 30 boys on the roll. We have tried all possible ways and means for canvassing boys, but have failed. I have been convinced that people are not prepared for this boycott.

"As to the the third boycott, there were only a very few lawyers who gave up their practice. Now almost all have rejoined. The number of court-going people never diminished. The *Lavad* Courts established by national workers never thrived and have since died. These courts, having had no power to enforce their decisions, and the people being not trained to submit, cannot be expected to attain any palpable success.

"Under these circumstances what are we—who boycotted our further education and prospects at the clarioncall of the Congress to sacrifice for the sake of the country only one year—to do? We have sacrificed not only one year but three. We established national schools for the people and the people heed them not. The sacrifice of the workers is not appreciated. Are not the national schools with such poor attendance a useless waste of the public money, energy and life? Does it not mean that our efforts and plans are premature? Our sacrifice gives no satisfaction to ourselves too. It is often a hindrance to patriotism or national enthusiasm. Khaddar is dearer

than mill-cloth and our means are poor. Though elected delegates to the Congress we cannot attend or have to refuse the seat, for want of the necessary money required for travelling and other expenses. We have to earn money not for luxury but as a necessity. But our ways are blocked by the Congress.

"I have a family to support and a delicate constitution, and hence cannot bear the hardships of village propaganda. The Congress has practically no work at present. What I think is that the Congress should arrange for the maintenance of workers and admit only those whom it can support. It should give permission to all others to follow their own pursuits patriotically and be soldiers of the militia (irregular army) ready at the country's call whenever required. Such people will enter Government and semi-Government schools and teach their prescribed books and lessons with a patriotic angle of vision. They will join the bar and show to the people at every step what a waste of time and money the Courts are. They will enter the military and refuse to fire on their own brethren. And so on. I know not what you intend to do after your recovery. In the meanwhile I seek your advice. I think that I am doing no better service to the people and to the country by remaining the head master of the national school here, which is not appreciated and supported by the public. May I complete my law education and join the bar and do what humble services I can to the Motherland? Will you advise the Congress to remove these boycotts and devise some other ways and means for attaining freedom? Or are you going to take up these boycotts in right earnest again? May we wait?

P. S. It is no question of Conscience and Religion. I look at Non-co-operation only as a means."

The foregoing letter sums up succinctly the argument advanced by my correspondents and visitors against the boycott of schools and law courts. As usual the sting is in the tail. The post-script yields the secret of unbelief in the boycott. One need not regard everything as a matter of conscience or religion to be able to stick to it through thick and thin. Even one's means may be so vital that giving them up may mean death. Lungs are the means whereby we breathe and sustain life.

They are not life. But their destruction is destruction of life itself. No one questions that non-co-operation is a means. The question is:-Is non-co-operation as conceived in 1920 the only means of reaching our goal? The Congress decided that it was. But the Congress merely represents the opinion of the delegates for the time being. Some of us evidently consider that it was a mistake to think that it was the only means. Some others think that it was one of the means and many more should have been adopted at the same time. Yet others, though they disbelieved in it, adopted it out of regard for the decision of the majority and because they think that the decision of the Congress have a mandatory character and bind the minority whether in matters of principle or detail. Yet others adhere to the opinion formed by them in 1920 that non-co-operation as then conceived is the only means for achieving our goal. I belong to the last category and it will be my humble duty from time to time to show why it is the only means. My correspondent evidently belongs to the opposite school.

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least therefore that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we would expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and therefore fitness for Swaraj. If we have no charity, and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must therefore al-

ways submit to the arbitrament of a third party i. e. to foreign domination. I invite the reader, then to share with me the respect that is due to the view set forth by my correspondent and if he belongs to the correspondent's school of thought, bear with me even though I cannot see eye to eye with him.

In my opinion, the boycott of schools and law courts has been both a failure and a success. It has been largely, not wholly, a failure in that schools and law courts have not been effectively or even appreciably deserted. But it has been a success in that the halo surrounding Government schools and law courts has disappeared. People believe, much more now than they did before, in the necessity of independent national schools and settlement of disputes by punchayats. Lawyers and Government schoolmasters have lost much of the artificial prestige they enjoyed five years ago. I count these as no small gains. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not undervalue the sacrifices and devotion to the country of schoolmasters and lawyers. Dadabhai and Gokhale were schoolmasters. Pherozeshah Mehta and Budruddin Tyebji were lawyers. But I would not have even these distinguished countrymen of ours to claim the exclusive monopoly of wisdom or ability to guide. The spinner, the weaver, the farmer, the artisan, the trader have just as much right to shape the destiny of the country as the members of the so-called liberal professions. As the latter have represented the arm of authority, we have been awed by them and to that extent they have accustomed us to think that we can satisfy our wants only through the Government instead of teaching us that the Government is a creation of the people and merely an instrument for

giving effect to their will. This false prestige of privileged classes has suffered a shock from which I hope it will never recover.

That national schools and punchayats have not flourished, as they might have, is due to a variety of causes, some avoidable and others unavoidable. We have been new to the work and therefore we have not known how to go about it. For me therefore the poverty of results is not a cause for disappointment but for greater and more enlightened effort. Our failures we can convert into so many steps to success.

The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it trying to take to the village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically. If our desire is to establish Swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse. Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly and willingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent self-respecting nation.

The difficulty with the non-co-operating lawyers is greater still. They have unfortunately been used to a highly artificial life totally out of harmony with their national surroundings. I regard it as a crime that any lawyer or doctor should charge or get say Rs. 1,000 per day or for that matter even Rs. 100 per day. It is no answer to the indictment that it is the monied men

who pay and there can be no harm, but it may be all to the good, if lawyers take money from the rich people and use a part for the public good. If the profession was disinterested and charged only enough for maintenance, the monied men would also have to revise their budget. As it is, we seem to be moving in a vicious circle.

If under Swaraj we shall have to make the town life correspond to the village life, we shall be bound to simplify the town mode of life. The beginning has to be made now. Why should lawyers feel so utterly helpless as they seem to do now? Is starvation the only alternative if they cannot resume practice? Is it impossible for a resourceful lawyer to turn his attention to weaving or any other honourable toil?

It is difficult for me to advice non-co-operating lawyers and schoolmasters. If they believe in the boycott they should face all difficulties and continue the boycott. If they do not believe in it, they can without any disgrace attaching to their action rejoin the profession. As I do not believe in the mandate theory, I do not consider it to be obligatory on any schoolmaster or lawyer to refrain from rejoining Government schools or law-courts because of the continuance of the boycott resolution. I would still advocate the retention of the boycott, to be worked out not by propaganda for emptying Government schools and courts (that was done and had to be done during 1920 and 1921) but by the constructive method of establishing and popularising national schools and punchayats.

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8th May, 1924

## IS IT NON-CO-OPERATION ?

BY M. K. GANDHI

The argument has been advanced that with the failure (in my opinion wrongly assumed) of the boycott of titles, schools, law-courts\*, and Councils, non-co-

\*The following appeared in Young India of 15th May, 1924:

*Non-inconsistent.*—A correspondent draws my attention to what he regards is an inconsistency between my statement to the press issued after my release regarding the Gurudwara movement, and the advice given by me just after Nankana Sahib tragedy. This is the statement made after my release:

My friends (Akalis) informed me to my surprise that there was a general misapprehension in the Punjab that after the Nankana tragedy, I had expressed an opinion that the Gurudwara movement should have been postponed till after the attainment of Swaraj. I never expressed the opinion attributed to me as can be amply verified from my writings and speeches at that time.

The correspondent quotes the following statement from my letter to the Sikhs after the Tragedy and regards it as inconsistent with the first.

“ No one can be more eager for real reform in our temples and removal of all abuse than I. But let us not be party to measures that may be worse than the reform sought to be brought about. There are two ways open to you (Khalsa) either to establish arbitration boards for settlement of possession of all Gurdwaras or *postponement of the question till the attainment of Swaraj.*

The italics are the correspondent's. I can see nothing inconsistent between the two statements. The first refers to the general movement and says that I never advised postponement till after the attainment of Swaraj. The second advised postponement of the question of *possession* of Gurudwaras till the attainment of Swaraj, if it could not be settled by arbitration. In this letter I have discussed



operation is dead. The critics see nothing of non-co-operation in the slow and unexciting Khaddar programme. They forget that the four-fold boycott is like a scaffolding which is absolutely necessary till the whole structure is ready. It does not matter that the institutions, which are the symbols of the authority we seek to destroy, continue to exist so long as *we* do not make use of them. The fact is that we cannot erect our structure without the scaffolding of the four-fold boycott. And we must succeed if we can work the Congress organisation without the aid of these institutions and even in spite of them. Moreover, let us not forget that our boycott is not four-fold, but five-fold. The fifth is by far the most important i.e. boycott of foreign (not merely British) cloth.

The boycott is the negative, though on that account none the less useful, part of our programme. Khaddar, national schools, panchayats, Hindu-Muslim unity, and uplift of the untouchable, the drunkard and the opium eater, is the positive part of our programme. The the propriety of taking possession by show of force. And my advice was that if arbitration did not succeed, and the choice lay between possession by show of force or postponement, my advice was for postponement. The curious may refer to the letter itself which he will see in his file of *Young India* for 1921, and he will find that I have discussed in it the question of show of force. Nothing that has happened since has altered the view taken by me in that letter. I am convinced that no reform can be achieved by show of force. I know that there must be two parties to arbitration. If the other party does not agree, a Non-co-operator will not seek the protection of a British Court of Law. But if he must choose between show of force and resort to Court of Law, i. e. if he is not prepared to sacrifice for the time being what he considers his right, I have no hesitation in saying that he must go to law even though it be British rather than seek to gain his purpose by show of force.

greater our progress in it, the greater will be the progress towards the boycott and therefore, towards Swaraj. Nature abhors a vacuum. Therefore, construction must keep pace with destruction. Even if all the titled friends gave up their titles, and if schools, courts and Councils were entirely deserted, and being thus embarrassed the Government abdicated in our favour, and if we had no constructive work to our credit, we could not conduct Swaraj. We should be entirely helpless. I often wonder whether it is sufficiently realised that our movement is not one for mere change of personnel but for change of the system and the methods. Full Khaddar programme is, therefore, to me full Swaraj. The English interest in India is selfish and in conflict with the national interest. It is anti-national, because of the illegitimate cotton interest. To boycott, therefore, foreign cloth, is to sterilise the English and all other foreign interests. Boycott merely of British cloth may harm the British, but can lead to no construction in India. Boycott of British cloth will be a jump out of the frying pan into fire. Not before the foreign piece-goods trade is entirely replaced by home-spun, will the bleeding process cease. Boycott of foreign cloth, therefore, is the centre of our boycott programme. This central boycott cannot succeed until we universalise Khaddar. In order to achieve the desirable end we will need to employ all our resources to the fullest extent. We shall need men, money and machinery i.e. organisation. We cannot universalise Khaddar without Hindu-Muslim unity, without removing untouchability. To make Khaddar successful is to *demonstrate* our capacity for self-government. Khaddar is a people's programme, for success in which all, high

and low, rich and poor, Hindu and non-Hindu, must take part.

But say the sceptics, 'How can Khaddar bring Swaraj? Will Englishmen then retire in our favour?' My answer is,—yes and no. Yes, because Englishmen will then find that their interest must be coincident with that of India. They will then be content to remain in India as her servants, for they will have then found that they cannot *impose* their custom upon us. When, therefore, Khaddar becomes successful, Englishmen's hearts will have been changed. They will regard it then as an honour to be our allies instead of regarding it as they do now their right to be our masters. My answer is 'No', if we intend to drive out Englishmen and ruin *every* English interest, legitimate or otherwise. Such is not the goal of the non-violent movement. Non-violence has its limits. It refuses to hate or generate hatred. Indeed by its very nature, it is incapable of so doing. 'But' the sceptics further argue, 'Suppose the English refuse to revise their system and insist upon holding India by the sword, what can universal use of Khaddar do?' In thus doubting the efficacy of Khaddar, they forget that Khaddar is an indispensable preparation for Civil Disobedience. And this, every one admits, is an irresistible force. Without the universal adoption of Khaddar, I see no chance whatsoever of universal civil, i. e. non-violent, disobedience. Any single district that can be fully organised for Khaddar is, if it is also trained for suffering, ready for Civil Disobedience. And I have not a shadow of doubt that even one district thus organised can make itself irresistible even though the whole might of the Government may be matched against it.

'Who shall bell the cat?' is the last question. That question is, however, irrelevant to the present inquiry. The question I set out to answer was whether constructive programme i. e. Khaddar could be considered part of Non-co-operation. I have attempted to prove that it is an integral part of Non-co-operation in its positive aspect.

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*22nd May, 1924*

PARODY OF RELIGION

BY M. K. GANDHI

A Delhi correspondent writes:—

"There are about sixty houses of Chamars in Rohed in the district of Rohtak. These are all labourers and have no property rights in the village land. They used to take water from the village pond so long as it was available. But after that supply failed they were at the mercy of the Zamindars for the well water. The latter would keep them waiting for hours before condescending to issue it to the poor untouchables. Latterly in order to avoid this delay a committee was appointed with a view to devise a remedy. This committee contained one Chamar. It decided that the Chamars should appoint a member of the Mali (gardener) caste to draw water for them and pay him Rs. 15 per month. The Chamars were disposed to agree but now they feel they ought not to pay what is after all a heavy and iniquitous monthly tax upon them. What is one to do? Should the Chamars approach the Government officials for a piece of land to dig their own well? Will it not be in conflict with Non-co-operation."

The answer to the question asked is exceedingly simple. The Chamars are no non-co-operators. They have no politics. But the staunchest Non-co-operator is not precluded from buying or getting land from the Government for necessary purposes. The less he does so, undoubtedly the better. But there is no bar against it in the Congress resolution. A non-co-operator who understands the spirit of the resolution will certainly not buy land from the Government for

profit. In the case in point the land is required for the necessities that nature has imposed upon us. And if the Chamars can get land from the Government for digging a well, the staunchest non-co-operator in my opinion need not hesitate to assist them to get it.

But the answer to the question is the least difficult part of my task. What is to be said of the Hindu zamindars who would not have the decency and the ordinary humanity to issue water in due time to men who belong to their own religion and who serve them in hundreds of ways? And all this callousness in the name of religion? If their well is likely to be polluted by the Chamars using them, way will *they* not pay the gardener for the luxury of enjoying their exclusiveness? Why will they not give them a plot of land for digging a well in it? Does my correspondent know whether the zamindars have been approached for a plot of land? If a deputation waits on them, they will perhaps not only grant a plot but have a well dug at their expense. If the attempt has not been made, it should be made. Immediate relief may be obtained by securing a piece of land from the Government. But the campaign against untouchability is an attempt to blot it out from Hinduism. No numbers of separate wells will do it. Hindu reformers have therefore a double task before them to secure relief for the suffering brethren, and to change, by a proper appeal to them, the hearts of those who believe in the evil and savage custom of regarding our own kith and kin as untouchables.

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*15th May, 1924*

## EMPIRE GOODS BOYCOTT

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is curious how the question of the Empire goods boycott continues to challenge public attention from time to time. From the stand-point of non-violent non-co-operation it seems to me to be wholly indefensible. It is retaliation pure and simple and as such punitive. So long, therefore, as the Congress holds to *non-violent* non-co-operation, so long must boycott of British, as

distinguished from other foreign goods, be ruled out. And if I am the only Congressman holding the view, I must move a resolution at the next Congress repealing the resolution in the matter carried at the last Special Session.

But for the moment, I propose to discuss not the ethics but the utility of the retaliatory boycott. The knowledge that even the Liberals joined the Boycott campaign cannot make one shrink from the inquiry. On the contrary, if they come to believe with me that the retaliatory boycott that they and the Congress took up was not only ineffective but was one more demonstration of our impotent rage and waste of precious energy. I would appeal to them to take up with zeal and determination the boycott of *all* foreign cloth and replacing same not with Indian mill-cloth but with hand-spun Khaddar.

I have had the pleasure of reading the report of the Boycott Committee. It must be, has remained, the last word on the utmost that can be done in the shape of boycott of British or Empire goods. The Report, in my opinion, presents a formidable case, not for but against such boycott. It frankly states that the bulk of the Empire goods, such for instance as railway material, is imported by the Government or English firms; that the trifles such as scents, soaps, boots imported are mostly consumed by those easy-going, luxury-loving Indians who are never likely to take to the boycott. It will be found on a calm consideration of the figures that even if the boycott of the trifles was scrupulously carried out by every Congressman and every Liberal, the amount would not be at the outside more than one crore of rupees per year. He must be a brave optimist who-

could believe that the Kenya Englishman or Englishmen in general, would be made to change their policy by reason of such boycott.

'But' says the critic, 'see what a flutter was created in Cheapside when the Empire goods boycott resolution of the Bombay Municipal corporation was cabled free of charge by Reuter.' Surely we know enough of the British trade methods not to be unduly elated by such flutters. They are often put on in order to inflame the gullible public against 'the unscrupulous Indian agitators who are bent upon injuring England'. When the excitement is not put on, it is a symptom of the British merchantile sensitiveness to every commercial fluctuation or movement. It is by such sensitiveness that it ever remains prepared for emergencies of every conceivable type. I would ask the public, therefore, never to rely upon the excitements or approbations from England, or for that matter from any foreign state. Their fear or praise of our action can never secure us in our position if our action which is either feared or praised is not, in itself substantially effective.

If our rage did not blind us, we should be ashamed of the boycott resolution when we realised that we depended upon British goods for some of our national requirements. When we may not do without English books and English medicines, should we boycott English watches because we can procure Geneva watches? And if we will not do without English books because we need them, how shall we expect the importer of British watches or perfumes to sacrifice his trade? My very English efficient nurse whom I loved to call 'tyrant' because she insisted in all loving ways on my taking

more food and more sleep than I did, with a smile curling round her lips and insidious twinkle in her eyes, gently remarked after I was safely removed to a private ward escorted by the house-surgeon and herself: "As I was shading you with my umbrella I could not help smiling that you, a fierce boycotter of everything British, probably owed your life to the skill of a British surgeon handling British surgical instruments administering British drugs, and to the ministrations of a British nurse. Do you know that as we brought you here, the umbrella that shaded you was of British make?" The gentle nurse as she finished the last triumphant sentence evidently expected my complete collapse under her loving sermon. But happily I was able to confound her self-assurance by saying: "When will you people begin to know things as they are? Do you know that I do not boycott anything merely because it is British? I simply boycott all foreign cloth because the dumping down of foreign cloth in India has reduced millions of my people to pauperism." I was even able to interest her in the Khaddar movement. Probably she became a convert to it. Any way she understood the propriety, the necessity and the utility of Khaddar, but she could only laugh (and rightly) against the wholly ineffective and meaningless boycott of British goods.

If the champions of this retaliatory boycott will look at their homes and their own belongings, they will, I have no doubt, discover the ludicrousness of their position even as my nurse friend did, under the supposition that I belonged to that boycott school.

I yield to no one in my desire to see justice done to our countrymen in Kenya or to win Swaraj at the earliest possible moment. But I know that angry



impatience can only frustrate the very end we have in view. What is it then in which all parties,—Liberals, pro-Councilwallas, No-Changers and others—can successfully combine to enable us to achieve our end? I have already given the answer. But I must examine it fully in the next issue and show why it furnishes the only feasible solution.

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*22nd May, 1924*

### BOYCOTT FOREIGN CLOTH

BY M. K. GANDHI

Last week I endeavoured to show the futility of the boycott of Empire goods\* campaign. I submit that it is even harmful in that it distracts the country's attention from the only effective and indispensable boycott. I have admitted more than once that if we eliminate non-violence from our consideration, those who do not believe with me that non-violence in politics is the only remedy for achieving our goal, and are satisfied that non-violent methods have failed, are not only justified in applying other remedies if they find them more effective, but are bound to do so. My point, however, is that boycott of Empire goods is not at all feasible so long as the present system is in existence. So far as I can see, the only alternative to non-violence and all it implies is an armed rebellion. If we wish to make preparations for it, boycott of Empire goods has not only a legitimate but it has a necessary place in the national programme. Its retention and a fierce propaganda in its favour must

\* See page 236.

increasingly heat our blood as we realise our impotence. The natural consequence of such propaganda must therefore result in undisciplined violence all round. It would not then matter, that it is crushed. It will still be considered a training in armed rebellion. Each crushing will certainly bring demoralisation among many but will bring increased determination among a few. And out of that small determined band may arise an army of soldiers such even as William the Silent surrounded himself with. If the national workers have come to the conclusion that India cannot write new history but must do as the European countries have done, I would understand and appreciate their campaign of boycott of Empire goods. Even though it may never succeed, it must be kept up as an ideal because it would be regarded as one of the factories for generating the necessary steam. India has a right to adopt the time-worn method, if she chooses to, and no power on earth can deprive her of that right.

But I venture to say, with confidence, that the way of the sword is not open to India. I dare to prophesy that if India chooses that way, she must be prepared

(1) Either to submit to foreign rule for generations to come,

(2) or to submit to exclusively Hindu or exclusively Mussalman rule almost in perpetuity.

I know that there are Hindus who if they cannot have a purely Hindu India are prepared to make the best terms with the Englishmen, and I know too, that, there are Mussalmans who, till they are able to impose a purely Mussalman rule on India are prepared to resign themselves to the English domination. To this

minority I have no argument to address. They must continue to plough the sands. But I know that there is a very large majority that is impatient of foreign domination and is anxious to find an effective method of ridding India of it. I do not despair of convincing them that Swaraj in which Hindus, Mussalmans and all others professing different creeds can participate on equal terms is attainable in a much shorter time than they can imagine possible if the thinking portion adopts means that are strictly non-violent and of further convincing them that attainment of such Swaraj is impossible through any other means.

For the time being, however, I propose to assume that the Congress creed being what it is, Congressmen are precluded from creating an atmosphere predisposed to violence. Ineffective boycott of Empire goods must create such an atmosphere, and therefore I go so far as to say that the boycott resolution was *ultra-vires* of the Congress creed. But this point can only be decided by the Congress.

Let me, therefore, confine the reader's attention to the alternative boycott of foreign cloth. I suggest to the Liberals, Nationalists and Congressmen that if they will all adopt the handspun Khaddar for their own personal use to the exclusion of all foreign or Indian mill cloth and if they will themselves religiously spin for a definite period every day and persuade every member of their family to do likewise, and if they will to the extent of their ability introduce the wheel and the use of Khaddar among their neighbours the nation can bring about the boycott of foreign cloth even in a year's time. Even as they may not on any pretext whatsoever use foreign cloth, they may not use cloth manufactured

in our mills. I must distinguish between the two prohibitions. Boycott of foreign cloth is a vital necessity for all time. There is no question of a permanent national boycott of mill-cloth. But Indian mills alone can never supply the present demand for cloth, whereas the Charkha and the hand-loom can. But the Khaddar, the product of the Charkha, has yet to become popular and universal. It can only be so if the thinking portion of India will make the commencement. They must therefore restrict their use of cloth to Khaddar only. Our mills need no patronage from us. Their goods are popular enough. Moreover the nation has no control over the mills. They are not philanthropic institutions. They are frankly selfish. They have their own propaganda. If they recognise the signs of the times they will help the foreign cloth boycott movement by cheapening their cloth and taking to areas not served at present by Khaddar. They can, if they will, avoid competition with Khaddar and be satisfied with supplementing it. *Boycott of foreign cloth cannot be immediately accomplished unless every national worker religiously avoids the use of mill-made cloth.* Surely the proposition is too simple to need any argument. Khaddar which has to find a market must command preference among enlightened men.

I have hitherto examined the use of Khaddar as the only effective and speedy means of bringing about a successful boycott of foreign cloth as distinguished from and as an alternative to that of Empire goods. But when to this potency of Khaddar is added its power to feed the starving millions, the case becomes irresistible.

It is perhaps now easy to understand why a Charkha atmosphere has to be created and why every

man and woman and child who understands the necessity of the Charkha for the national well being must religiously spin for some time every day. The peasantry of India is among the most industrious in the world as it is perhaps also the idlest. Both its industry and idleness are imposed upon it. It must work to make its fields yield their harvest. The East India Company by killing hand-spinning made it idle when it had no full labour to do. The peasantry will now return to the Charkha only when we set the example. Mere precept will produce little impression upon it. And when thousands spin for love, it is possible to give higher wages for spinning if we would keep the same price for Khaddar. I have myself been able to sell Khaddar manufactured at the Satyagrah-Ashram cheaper because I had maunds of yarn lovingly thrown to me by the Punjabi sisters during my tour in the Punjab in 1919. It was possible for me, if I had liked, to pay higher wages to professional spinners, and not reduce the price of Khaddar. I did not do so because at that early stage of the Khaddar movement, I was paying so high a price as 4 annas for one pound of yarn indifferently spun.

If the Liberals and the Congressmen stung by the Kenya decision hurled the ineffective boycott of Empire goods at the heads of the white colonists of Kenya, why will they not in their cooler moments concentrate their effort upon the complete success of the Khaddar movement and thereby ensure the boycott of all foreign cloth? Need I prove that the boycott of foreign cloth will not only bring relief to the Kenya Indians but it will also bring Swaraj?

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*24th July, 1924*

## THE PLIGHT OF TEACHERS

BY M. K. GANDHI

After describing the declining condition of national schools in a district, where out of fourteen, seven have died out and the rest are sinking, and where attendance is reduced from 2000 to 500, the head master of one of them writes :

"To be frank, the hearts of many of us, teachers of the national schools, sink when they think of their half-starved families and their crushing debts, and misgivings arise as to whether it is wise or foolish for a man embarrassed with debts to undergo so much suffering and whether it is advisable or not to serve the country in other ways than as starving schoolmasters. I should mention here that some of these teachers gave up at the call of the country much more lucrative situations."

This tale of woe need not frighten us. Nations are made after much travail. Either we must die like flies in an armed rebellion, than submit to military autocracy and in the distant and dim future hope to have democratic rule ; or by patient, natural, unperceived suffering evolve as a self-ruling self-respecting nation. It is by sufferings such as the correspondent describes that we shall find a remedy for the difficulties that face us. These constitute the real training in Swaraj. The fault is not wholly the parents'. It is inherent in our surroundings. We have not yet learnt the virtue of sustained work in defiance of all odds. Teachers are the centre round whom the whole of the national education system must revolve. If they lose their balance, the system must topple. But the teachers have been inexperienced. They have not all had the

unquenchable fire for keeping alive the taste for national education. They have not the organising ability, nor the power of concentration and consecration. Everywhere the workers instead of specialising in one branch of service have dabbled in everything with the result that they have been able to do nothing thoroughly. But this was inevitable. We are new to the game. Our rulers have trained us as clerks and put us to work requiring little thinking and less initiative. But the old order is changing. In the first flush of enthusiasm we seemed to be doing well if not very well. Now that the enthusiasm has died out and the moisture of public support has dried up, only the hardiest plants will survive. Let me hope the schools and the school-masters that still remain are of the right stuff. They must beg from door to door for maintenance and not feel ashamed if they are honest workers.

The head master has asked also specific questions which being of general utility I copy and answer below.

Q. "How long can the poor teachers embarrassed with increasing debts continue to have connection with these schools working on starvation allowance?"

A. Till death even as a soldier fights till he is victorious or, which is the same thing, droups down dead.

Q. "How long will the authorities continue these schools at a great loss of money, if even 1 percent of the people do not want them?"

A. No school has a right to exist if the people do not want it. But I would blame the authorities if the people who brought a school into being afterwards do not want it.

Q. "Education can be suspended and workers can suffer for one year or two years or three years, but what will be the case if the fight for Swaraj continues for an indefinite period?"

A. Those who can suffer for one to three years will find themselves injured to suffering for thirty years.

Q. "How can the few boys that really want national education read where no national school exists."

A. If the parents or the boys or girls for that matter are resourceful, they will find out a way. It is superstition to think that education can only be had at schools or only through English or in a particular orthodox style. To learn spinning and weaving is an education of first class importance at the present moment. Let us also remember that the majority of Indian villages have no schools at all.

Q. "How long should our countrymen be allowed to vote for a resolution which they will never carry out in practice? All will vote for boycott of Government schools but very few of these voters will send their boys to national schools."

A. Not one minute longer than I can help. All my fight in the A. I. C. C. was directed towards our being true to our resolutions.

I know that the replies I have given will be considered unsatisfactory by many. But I dare say that they are the only correct and practical answers. We must do away with camouflage. If the nation as a whole does not want national schools *in answer* to the boycott of (not supplementary to) Government schools, it must be altered. The minority that may still want the boycott must make good their desire by running their own national schools, but not under the Congress *aegis*. These schools will be run only where they are wanted. If there be only one such school, it will continue without being disheartened. Faith knows no disappointment.

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7th August, 1924  
BELOW THE BELT  
By M. K. GANDHI

What has been said about the Government so often is being proved again, viz, that no matter what it grants to popular clamour it always insists on having its way by hook or by crook. The Press Law is gone only to be replaced by new activities under the laws of sedition and libel. Everything the Government were able to do under the Press Law is now being done without it and without difficulty. The extraordinary judgment given against the *Chronicle*\* does but confirm this view. It is difficult to believe that a public servant can possibly bring an action for damages for comment upon his acts as such made by a journalist in the discharge of his profession. I understand that the case against the *Chronicle* is not the first of its kind. The *Bande Mataram* and the *Zamindar* of Lahore had to pay damages under similar circumstances. Which is worse? Forfeiture under the defunct law or damages under a libel suit? After the result of the *Chronicle* case, who can dare criticise frankly and freely the acts of Government servants? The editor of a daily newspaper when he begins writing his leading article does not weigh his words in golden scales. He may be betrayed into a hasty word. Must he pay for it even though he did it obviously in good faith, without malice and in the public interest? The writer in the *Chronicle* certainly did not know Mr. Painter and had no more interest in maligning him than the learned judge himself who has awarded what I venture to regard as vindictive damages.

\* See foot note in page 260.

The public will refuse to believe that Mr. Painter had suffered anything because of the *Chronicle* comments. But I make bold to think that he has lost more in public estimation by his victory than by the *Chronicle* comment. He has cleared nothing by getting a verdict against the *Chronicle*. But he has shown that he is not capable in a sportsman-like manner of standing strong public criticism. I feel sorry for him.

What, however, I am concerned about is the position of journalists in view of this case. One is not always able to prove one's convictions and, if one is to criticise public acts and their doers, it is necessary to set forth one's convictions without being called upon always to prove them. For instance I feel morally certain that the judgment of the judge in Sir Sankaran Nair's case was warped. I am morally certain that the judge was politically biased in favour of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. And yet if what I have said be regarded libellous and if the Judge sent me notice of action I should have to tender a humble, abject and unconditional apology for having expressed my candid opinion in the interest of public good. I should have to tender the apology because I could not prove what I have stated.

Mr. Painter is but an unconscious pawn in the big game. This Government is making hay while the sun shines upon it. We seem to be disorganised—a house divided against itself. Hindus and Mussalmans would gladly continue to indulge in the pleasant pastime of breaking one another's heads. Civil disobedience is a far-off cry. Whilst we are fighting among ourselves, the Government is consolidating its power, in every possible manner. We may not blame it. It is perfectly natural for it. These libel actions are calculated to

demoralise Indian journalism and make public criticism over-cautious and timid. I am no lover of irresponsible or unjustifiably strong criticism. But the caution to be beneficial must come from within, not super-imposed from without.

One thing is clear to me. If we have lost ground by our dissensions, political or religious, the Government have lost more by its taking advantage of our misfortunes and by seeking to punish innocent criticism of public officers for their public conduct, by inducing or permitting the latter to embark upon libel actions. We may feel too paralysed for immediate effort but every act of the Government which is meant to take a mean advantage of our weakness and every hit below the belt does but intensify our opposition to it. The paralysis will be shortlived, the opposition must be conterminous with the existence of the system which makes our unfortunate position possible.

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*14th August, 1924*

### WANTED EXCITEMENT

BY M. K. GANDHI

I present the readers with extracts from a letter received from a lawyer who has made considerable sacrifices in the national cause. When he non-co-operated he sold out his books. He is now despondent. He ends his letter by saying, 'I have written this letter only to relieve my surcharged mind. If it is ignored, I shall not feel disappointed.' I cannot ignore any genuine article, I have therefore adopted the middle course. I have boiled down the letter by expunging sorrowful and

admonitory portions. Here then are the extracts that call for comment.

"The charkha, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability have not appealed to the masses for the last two years. There is no sign of coming change.

The no-changers should form their programme in conformity with human nature. They should take into consideration that there must be excitement to call forth mass-enthusiasm. Satyagraha is the best form of excitement. But it should be a direct and open fight with the Government. Inter-communal Satyagraha is harmful. It only gives advantage to the Government to fight in the darkness and behind the trenches at safe distance. It leaves plenty of way for intrigues and mischievous propaganda. To enter into open fight with the Government strong issues should be selected on which wider public sympathy can be enlisted. Any of the following issues will fulfil these conditions, one of which may be selected.

1. Boycott of courts and establishment of arbitration in villages, towns and cities with offices for registration of documents.
2. Boycott of currency by replacing it with hundis.
3. Suppression of drinks and intoxicating drugs."

I do not believe that we have worked enough among the masses to entitle us to know that three things do not appeal to them. What experience we have of the masses i. e. the villages goes to show that the charkha has appealed to them. They simply need organising. But we who claim to be their leaders refuse to go to the villages and live in their midst and deliver the life-sustaining message of the charkha. The writer simply does not know the masses. Or he should know that the Hindu-Muslim masses do not quarrel. Delhi is not a village. And there too it would be a libel to say that the poor people quarrelled. We incited them to the fratricidal fight. The untouchability is undoubtedly a difficult point among the masses. It does however appeal to them, only it appeals in a way we do not like. They hug the exclusiveness which they have inherited for

ages. But if we cannot, by our purity, unselfishness and patience, cure them of the disease, we must perish as a nation. The sooner every political reformer realises the fact, the better it is for him and the country. We must refuse to give up the struggle or postpone it till after Swaraj. Postponement of it means postponement of Swaraj. It is like wanting to live without lungs. Those who believe that Hindu-Muslim tension and untouchability can be removed after Swaraj are living in the dream-land. They are too fatigued to grasp the significance of their proposition. The three things must be an integral part of any programme of Swaraj. But though the task is difficult, it is not impossible. I claim therefore that this three-fold programme of construction is in strict conformity with human nature as it exists in India. It is in keeping with the daily requirements of a people that is bent on making progress.

But the friend says, there must be 'excitement.' I do not know what the word means. For workers there is enough excitement in the three things. Go to any village, put up a wheel and call the villagers to embrace their untouchable brethren. The children will dance round the forgotten wheel and the villagers will be inclined to pelt you out of their midst for asking them to embrace the untouchables unless you ask them in a reasonable and sweet way. This is 'excitement' that giveth life. But there is another variety of it which 'kills'. It is momentary excitement that blinds people and makes them create a splash for a moment. That kind of excitement cannot bring Swaraj. I can conceive its use for a fighting people prepared to wrest power from other hands. The problem in India is not quite so simple. We are not prepared and we are not fighters

with arms. The Englishmen do not rule merely by force. They have seductive ways also. They can carefully conceal their fist in soft-looking gloves. The moment we show intelligent organisation, honest but unbendable purpose and prefect and disciplined cohesion they will hand over the whole administration to us without a blow and serve India on our terms, as we to-day unwittingly or unwillingly slave for them on their terms.

Satyagraha is not excitement of the second variety. It dies in such atmosphere. It needs the development of calm courage that knows no defeat and despises revenge. Even inter-communal satyagraha (if it is satyagraha) strengthens the nation for fighting the Government. The unseemly fight between no-changers and pro-changers is not satyagraha in any sense of the term. The disgraceful events of Delhi are clearly not satyagraha. The only instances of inter-communal satyagraha are the Vaikom and Tarkeshwar. I know something of Vaikom because I am supposed to be directing it. It must succeed if the satyagrahis are patient, absolutely truthful, absolutely non-violent, yes, in thought, word and deed, and if they are gentle towards their opponents and remain fixed to their minimum. If they fulfil the conditions, the orthodox Hindus will bless them and they will strengthen and weaken the national cause. Of Tarkeshwar I know next to nothing. But the result can only be good if it is true satyagraha.

The correspondent's method of bringing about a state of 'excitement' is in keeping with his misunderstanding of satyagraha. He does not realise that arbitration courts and registration of documents, if they have

the element of compulsion in them, must defeat the very end the writer has in view. And if they are devoid of compulsion, they will offer less excitement than the wheel if only because no one will care to register documents in private courts. Boycott of currency without the stick behind will be still less exciting. I would give much to be able to revive liquor shops picketting if a calm atmosphere can be established and 'peaceful' picketting can be found. Experience shows that our picketting in 1921 was not all peaceful.

True solution is to be found from within. It is not the masses but we that have lost faith. For the correspondent who is in charge of a Congress committee says that resignations are pouring in upon him. Why? Because those who are resigning have no faith in the programme. Whereas hitherto they were playing, now they are taking themselves and the nation seriously. They are responding to truth. I regard these resignations a distinct gain to the cause. If all play the game and either carry out the resolutions or resign, we should know where we are. To the secretary in charge I would suggest that he should invite the electors, if there are any at all on his register, to elect their representatives. If the members were practically self appointed, as I fear is the case in many places, the secretary may safely remain the sole true representative of the Congress, if he has faith in himself and the programme. He is then free to devote his whole time and attention to spinning. I promise that he will not find himself the only one so devoted to spinning. There is no cause for despondency for a man who has faith and resolution.

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21th August, 1924

## THE STUDENTS AND MALABAR

A very interesting function last week was the presentation to Mr. Gandhi of a purse of Rs. 1239 by Principal Kirpalani on behalf of the students of the Gujarat Vidyalaya. He was specially requested to visit the Vidyalaya and to address the students on the occasion.

Principal Kirpalani opened the proceeding with a touching little welcome speech. 'We are grateful at your coming but we have nothing to welcome you with' said he. Adopting the fine little poem in *Gitanjali* he said,

"We were fast asleep, and did not know that the king was coming. Some one did say 'The king will come.' But we said, No one can come.' A knocking at the door was heard, and some one warned us that it was the king's messenger. But we heard him not. We said it was the wind that was blowing. Another loud knock was heard. Some one suggested, 'It is the rumbling of the chariot wheels.' No, we contended, it was the rumbling of the clouds. We left aside our charkhas, hoping to take them up when the king came, but had never the slightest idea that the king would surprise the drowsy sleepers of the night so soon." With poignant, self-reproachful sarcasm he said; 'You have come too soon, Bapu. We have not had time enough to get our wheels ready and set them in motion. We have not even had time, some of us, to change our mill-made clothing. You have come sooner than we bargained for. How shall we welcome you, who is come upon us like the poets' king of the dark night? We have not the things that would delight your heart. We have just a few rupees, a little yarn we have spun during the last few days to give you and a tattered mat to seat you on."

The purse presented, Mr. Gandhiji addressed a few words to students. A brief summary of the speech will not be without interest to the readers of *Young India*.



The king, said Mr. Gandhi, had only to thank himself, if they were not ready to receive him as they would. He promised to be away for six years, and he had returned four years too soon. How could they be ready to receive him before his time? But he was sure that they had done all that they could do, and he was deeply thankful for it.

He had a letter from a professor of the Vidyalaya from which he learnt that a hot controversy was raging in their debating halls as to whether one should spin for Gandhiji, or for the country. He had been asked to settle the question for them and he would try to do it as best as he could.

There were different ways of looking at the thing, and to him, both were right. What is Gandhi? He may be the hero of a day, and a thing done for him must cease, as soon as he ceases to hold the popular mind. At best Gandhi was a thing or entity of a temporary nature, as compared to the country which was of a permanent nature. He was therefore wiser who did a thing out of allegiance to the country in preference to Gandhi. On the other hand he could understand a thing being done for the love of Gandhi. But there were different ways of doing things for the sake of Gandhi. One may share Gandhi's faith in the charkha, and yet may be too lazy to spin. It may be that Gandhi's name will help him to shake off his lethargy and for the love of him he may begin plying the wheel. That to him was a legitimate use of Gandhi's name. But that was the limit beyond which one could not be permitted to go.

On the contrary one may have absolutely no faith in the charkha, and yet he may reconcile himself to work-

ing it for Gandhi's sake. This last, in his opinion, was hardly proper or being true to oneself and the thing he wants more than any thing else to-day is being true to oneself, freedom from camouflage, freedom from hypocrisy.

There was another way of looking at the problem. There is a thing like doing something for the sake of a principle or a religious vow. In that connection he would say that attachment or love for one's dear ones may help a man to a very great extent. Mr. Gandhi said, giving his own instance, that but for the love he bore to his father he might not have come to pledge himself to truth. It became an instinct with him to speak the truth, not because he realised the significance of truthfulness then, but because he felt that he must do so for the love of his father. But for his intensive love for mother similarly, he would not have escaped meat-eating and an unchaste life. Vows he regarded as aids to one's attempt to secure freedom from slavery to one's own lusts.

Coming to the programme before the country, Mr. Gandhi said there were many ways in which they could help the programme viz. the triple programme of khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and untouchability. Regarding khaddar he would say no more than he had already said. How were they going to help the case of Hindu-Muslim unity? 'Have you met' he asked, 'Mussalman boys or Parsi boys outside your college? Have you asked them why they do not come to your college? Have you reasoned with them regarding the necessity to use khaddar? If you have, and have failed, I do not mind. But if you have made no effort in the direction, I should have to say that you have done

nothing for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity ? Speaking on the removal of untouchability he referred to an incident that happened a few days ago on the new Vidyapith grounds. There were some 'untouchable' labourers working along with the touchables when the building work was going on. The former had to suffer a lot of hardships as the latter would not allow them the use of the well meant for all of them. "What was your duty then?" he asked the students. 'If you had enough moral and physical strength in you, you could have proceeded to the spot and asked the 'touchables' to leave you and the 'untouchables' alone. You could have told them you did not want their services on their conditions. If you could not do this, you could have done the next best thing viz. drawing water for them yourself or doing a thing still next best; viz. providing facilities for them to get all the water they needed. Less than this you ought not to be satisfied with."

He next addressed himself to drawing the students attention to the Malabar catastrophe. It was too big too terrible to contemplate. He had already appealed to the people of Gujarat to help in the relief of the thousands that the floods had rendered homeless and starving and naked. It may be utterly impossible for them to rehabilitate them, but they may help at least in providing them food and clothing whilst they were without them. And there were ways and ways in which they could help. 'Those of you that can afford to give money can do so. But all of you can curtail your food bills, all of you can abstain from other necessities, whilst the distress lasted, each one of you can spin a few hours each day, convert the yarn into money and send it to Malabar, each one of you can out of college hours work

on the Vidyapith grounds and help in the construction of the buildings you will stay in, earn wages like the ordinary day-labourer working there, and send them on to Malabar.'

After Mr. Gandhi had finished, the students and professors presented him with yarn (which was at least 5 tolas each) they had spun especially for the occasion. This yarn has been purchased by the Ashram and the proceeds credited to the Malabar fund. It may be mentioned in passing that the effect of Mr. Gandhi's appeal about Malabar was immediate. All the students next Sunday went forward and offered themselves to the engineer in charge as day-labourers. There was work enough for them. It was a sight to see them carrying baskets of brick and building material, all bathed in perspiration, merrily singing and vying with one another. They earned, we were informed, Rs. 45 that day for Malabar. The experiment has caught, and it is expected that it will be repeated every Sunday, and students from other institutions may also join. 'Sweet are the uses of adversity' which draws out the best in us.—M. D.

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The following notes by Mahatma Gandhi appeared in *Young India* of 18th September, 1924 :

### SUSPENSION OR REPEAL

"Is not your proposed suspension of boycotts only repeal in disguise?" Not for me. I have no present intention of securing repeal of the boycotts. If I had, I should not have hesitated to say so. I hope that it may not be found necessary to resume them. But I should have not the slightest hesitation in advising

resumption if I found them necessary for national growth, just as I find their suspension necessary for national growth. "Are you not postponing the internecine feud for a year?" says the friend. My answer again is no. We would know at the end of the year where we stand. The boycotts certainly cannot be revived, if at the end of the year there is still a likelihood of sharp divisions. They can only become the national programme if the active workers on the political field can be persuaded of their necessity. Till that happens, they must remain a policy or a creed with a minority. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that whatever the Government yields will be yielded to the demand of the small, vocal and active section of the nation. Nothing will be yielded if this section is divided into many warring sub-sections. I should expect one of two things at the end of the year, either the no-changers will be converted to the purely political i. e. external activity or the pure politicians will, recognising the futility of mere external activity, devote themselves to the intensive internal development which would necessarily involve acceptance of boycotts. It may be also that the internal development as well as political activity will command far more general acceptance and, each party helping the other, we shall compel the Government\* to accede to the minimum joint demands of all the parties.

\* *King can do no wrong.*—Mr. Kelkar, if he criticises a judge, must pay Rs. 5000, the *Chronicle* must pay Rs. 15000 for criticising a Collector. But Lord Lytton, because he is the king's representative in Bengal, may libel the woman-hood of India with impunity and may probably receive applause from his admirers for his 'frank' talk. His Excellency is reported to have said in a serious speech that 'mere hatred of authority can drive Indian men to induce Indian women to

The central idea underlying my proposal is to unite the nation on a common platform and to the hope that each party, honestly acting upon the other, would be voluntarily converted to a common form of action. Even if this grand purpose fails, we may expect at least to part company with the best grace possible and without imputing motives of one another. Suspension is not an unusual state in a movement. It often brings greater strength to a suspended plan, if it has innate vitality. Those, therefore, who believe in the intrinsic merit of the boycotts need not fear their permanent disappearance because of a brief spell of suspension. They, the believers, ought to be the surest guarantee against any such catastrophe.

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invent offences against their own honour merely to bring discredit upon Indian police-men.' If it was not in a report of his speech but if it was merely a reporter's summary, I would have refused to believe that a responsible Englishman could be capable of such a 'blazing indiscretion.' Lord Lytton evidently does not know or does not care to know how deeply Indian sentiment can be stirred by such charges against Indian women. Has Lord Lytton incontestable proof for the assertion he has made? If it is merely the testimony of the police he has relied upon, he has relied upon a broken reed. His advisers should have warned him against putting faith in any such interested testimony. But why has he been able to utter such calumny with impunity? If public opinion in Bengal and for that matter in India was effective, he would not have dared to utter such a charge even if it could be established in an isolated case? But there is no public opinion in the country that can assert itself to-day. Let not even the mightiest in the land however consider that they can flout Indian sentiment for ever. Hindu-Muslim feud and the differences between pro-changers and no-changers are temporary aberration in the national movement. But the insults of Englishmen in high places sink deep in the hearts of all Indians. It is so humiliating to contemplate a closing up of all ranks among us on the strength of indiscreet acts of irresponsible representatives of the king.

## 'HEART UNITY'

A correspondent writes.

"In your reply to the Bombay Municipal address you have used an expression—heart-unity. I pondered and meditated on it and saw that in the core of the Universe is the secret of heart-unity. One has to go down far into the fathomless depths, grasp and run away with divine touch-stone and touch with it the sundered and discoloured parts of human associations to bring back colour and happiness. It is in the inner being of both *Satya and Rita*, of Truth and Law of Nature. It is heart-unity that binds planet to planet and holds aloft space, and it is heart-unity that keeps elemental matter bound each to the other. Chemists had discovered water was a compound of hydrogen and oxygen but by bringing the two together they could not get water till an electric current passed through them. That electric current is the heart-unity in nature. It is heart-unity that transforms things—melts ice into water, and freezes water into ice; evolution and involution, the descent of spirit into matter and the return of matter to spirit are all the work of heart-unity.

Parvati's *tapasya* for heart-unity with Shiva is a wonderful piece of Hindu imagery. Parvati is God's Shakti or the active principle in the Universe, incarnate in human form. I feel it was a direct vision from God to some *sadhak* ancestor of the race. The force of activity in the Almighty was revealed in its most beautiful aspect, in the place of matter, as Parvati engaged in *tapasya*—for what? for nothing less, i. e. denser than heart-unity with the Heart of Hearts—a lesson for humanity to con and master. You have

mastered it and applied it in the political field by heart-unity with the Alis and others, with the result that we are well on our way to get the compound of an Indian Nation made out of several distinct elements of various races and creeds. May the country take the cue from you and be firm in her *tupasya* of activity in the direction of heart-unity."

I print the letter not for the compliment it pays me but for the heart-unity the writer emphasises and truly sees in my association with the Ali Brothers and others not of the same faith or even of the same mode of thought. "What is it" the Big Brother said to me last week, "that binds us so indissolubly together, though we are so dissimilar in most things. Is it not after all the allegiance to and the fear of the same God?" What he said was so natural and true. Why should we blaspheme God by fighting one another because we see Him through different media—the *Koran*, the *Bible*, the *Talmud*; the *Avesta* or the *Gita*? The same Sun beats on the Himalayas as on the plains. Should the men of plains quarrel with the men of the snows because of the different feel of the Sun? Why should we make of books and formulas so many fetters to enslave us rather than use them as aids to our deliverance and union of hearts?

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4th December, 1924

SUSPEND OR ABANDON ?

BY M. K. GANDHI

The answer to the question whether non-co-operation should be suspended or abandoned depends purely upon the temperamental state of the answerer. He who



has never believed in non-co-operation naturally wants it abandoned for ever. He who like me has always believed in and practised it, whenever and wherever necessary, and who therefore swears by it can with difficulty only be persuaded to vote for suspension in the hope no doubt that some time or other he will be able to carry the sceptic and the unbeliever with him and make its national working a success. Suspension therefore is the neutral state that can be accepted by all parties. Those who believe in the efficacy and necessity of non-violent non-co-operation may be permitted to cherish the hope that if the occasion necessitated revival the nation would take it up. Those who disbelieve in it will be free under suspension to preach the evil effects in their opinion of non-co-operation to convert Congressmen to their views. That is the grand opportunity that suspension gives them. And in my opinion a wholly non-co-operating Congress cannot be expected to go further than suspension. I say 'wholly non-co-operating Congress' because Swarajists too claim to have faith in non-co-operation. Let me give up a secret, if secret it can be called. The very first draft prepared now more than three months ago began with a preamble reiterating belief in non-co-operation. It was quite acceptable to Swarajists. But it was removed by mutual consent in order to make it easier for Liberals and others to join. It was pointed out by some friends that Liberals and National Home Rulers might object to voting for the preamble. In fact consistently with principles extraordinary care was taken by all who had a hand in drafting the final agreement to anticipate and meet the requirements of those who have remained outside the Congress. I know that even so, the agreement falls

short of the full requirements of the various political groups and parties. The reason for the defect is not due to want of effort or will, but it is due to both the Swarajists and myself having to take into account our respective principles, or call them limitations if that word is preferable.

Moreover I cannot too often repeat the fact that we had the great Congress electorate in mind. It is true that it is as yet not always assertive when it ought to be but I have noticed that on occasions it can assert its will despite the effort of the leaders to the contrary. It is the same electorate that all of us have to affect and be affected by. In finding the ways and means of agreement I venture to think that each party if it is to work in unison has to be satisfied with just sufficient and no more for the requirements of its conscience.

After all no one wants non-co-operation for the sake of it. No one prefers imprisonment to freedom. But when freedom is in jeopardy, non-co-operation may be a palace. It is for all those who would under every circumstance avoid non-co-operation to make it unnecessary for non-co-operators to resort to it. And one of the best methods of bringing about such a result is for all parties to unite, devise a scheme of Swaraj acceptable to all parties and discover at the same time if it is possible a common method of enforcing that scheme.

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## WHAT IS SEDITIOUS?

The Allahabad High Court pronounced Professor Ramdas Gaud's Hindi Readers as seditious, although it was admitted that the readers contained nothing but

selections from books already in circulation. The High Court has also awarded costs against the professor in the sum of Rs. 300. The Readers have been proscribed three years after their publication. I admit that evil does not cease to be such because of lapse of time. But it is fair to ask why the Government allowed the evil to run for such a long time. It is a just presumption that the Government chose a time when non-co-operation was at its ebb. The relevant question however is, what Professor Ramdas Gaud or better still those parents and those institutions that are using the Readers should do? It is not an easy question to answer. We are about to suspend non-co-operation and therefore also civil disobedience. Such acts therefore cannot receive the moral support of the Congress. Every individual and every institution must act on its own responsibility. The extracts quoted in the judgement divide themselves into three parts :

(1) Those that are said to excite hatred against the Government,

(2) Those that are said to excite hatred against western civilization and by implication against Europeans,

(3) Those that excite hatred against persons belonging to different religious communities.

In the first instance I venture to suggest that almost any book can be held objectionable, if isolated passages from it torn from their context are to be judged. So far as I know the judges had nothing more. Secondly almost every Indian newspaper can be declared seditious, because it does excite disaffection towards the Government (i. e. the system, not the men composing it) established by law.' For almost every Indian has pronoun-

ced against it and is seeking to end or mend it. So far as the western civilisation is concerned, it is possible to find terrible passages from Hindu scriptures holding up the modern system to ridicule and contempt. My booklet, from which passages referring to western civilization have been quoted, has been placed in the hands of children with impunity. I may have erred in my condemnation. But it was written not to preach hatred against any portion of mankind but love for all that lives. I know of no instance in which a single mind has been corrupted by the reading of that booklet. It has been translated both in India and abroad into several languages. It was once proscribed by the Government of Bombay. But the proscription has been removed in practice if not in theory. It is strange then that Prof. Ramdas Gaud should be punished, when I am left untouched. In support of the third charge, namely promotion of inter-religious hatred, I see only one passage quoted. I do not know in what context it occurs. But it is clear to me that the books have not been proscribed for the sake of that one passage. I know that the professor has a clear conscience. He has not intended to excite hatred against any individual. I know too that he has made no profits out of the sales. If I were he, I would leave the circulation undisturbed. The books in stock must have been confiscated by the Government already. But where the Readers are already being taught I would continue to teach them unless the parents or the trustees decide otherwise

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*12th March, 1925*

## NATIONAL EDUCATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

An Assistant Principal in a National institution writes :

"In order to save the young generation from the slave mentality created in the Government schools, the National Education movement was started on a large scale in the first decade of this century. It only aimed at establishing schools where education was imparted 'on national lines and under national control.' As the leaders of every movement expect a substantial support from the rising generation, it is but natural that they should lay their first claim upon the youths of the country. From this point of view, it may be said that the movement in 1906 was in a way successful. It undoubtedly produced a band of workers many of whom have taken a vigorous part in the struggle for freedom. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that as a purely educational movement, it had neither a separate source nor a separate existence. The weakest link lay in the fact that it had its source in the main political current of the day. When the latter reached its lowest ebb, the former was bound to get dry.

"The N. C. O. movement gave a second impetus—indeed a tremendous one—to the cause of National Education. Hundreds of mushroom schools sprang into existence all over the country. Their object was also limited in scope. They mainly aimed at accommodating the N. C. O. students for one year only. The boys were to be made 'Swaraj Soldiers' i. e. workers to carry out the different items of N. C. O. Here again the educational movement had no existence separate from the political one. When the latter lost its force, the former became feeble and infirm.

"The result is that National Education has always been given a secondary or subordinate place in the programme and no scientific and independent thought has ever been accorded to it by any leader. It seems that with you it is not as dear as Khaddar, or, it may be that with you Khaddar and National Education mean one and the same thing! The Swarajists are enamoured only of the Councils. Taking these facts into consideration is it possible for the movement to make any progress? And if it meets with failure now and again,

will it not produce a lamentable and discouraging effect upon the majority of the people?

"According to the tactics of the Government and expediency, politics assumes—and it must do so—a different phase in particular circumstances and at the hands of the leaders 'in power.' The Indian National Congress may always be under the thumb of one party or the other, each with a different programme, one emphasizing the production of Khaddar and the removal of untouchability, the second, the village organization and the establishment of the Panchayats, the third, universal literacy, while the fourth will instantly jump to civil disobedience. You will of course say that all these things ought to be done by national students, because they must readily respond to the call of the nation. Do you think that the capacity of the students will be increased in respect of learning, character and efficiency if they do one thing to-day and another thing tomorrow?

"The aim of education is to develop the physical and mental organs of children so as to make them worthy citizens of their country. This can only be done when boys are in the secondary schools. Before that they are too young and after that their character will have taken already a particular bent difficult to be turned to any other desirable direction. Now according to your opinion, the age in secondary schools is to be devoted mainly to hand-spinning, hand-weaving and everything connected with it. Is not that education unnatural and oppressive where students of varied capabilities and different aptitudes are cramped together in one and the same mould? Do you think that the boys who have received such kind of education will have received all the necessary fruits of education? Will they be well-equipped to bring out a national regeneration in all possible spheres? The experience is that the social status of almost all the students and teachers who have passed their days in the above-mentioned way are considered inferior even to those who have obtained the so-called 'liberal education' in Government institutions. If the teacher himself is in difficulty of getting an honourable livelihood, his social status remains low and consequently he can make little impression upon the pupils and the public. In your schools only the weavers' children can be profitably trained. For others a much more liberal and extensive course is necessary. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving may become one item of the curriculum, but it cannot and must not become the whole. Is it not better to lay

down some broad fundamental and definite principles of national education and give every institution discretion to act according to its requirements, capabilities and the calibre of the students?

"You often say that an actual non-violent war is being waged against the British Government and that you want worthy and well-equipped soldiers to fight it out. Do you suppose that you can get a continuous supply of such soliders from schools where nothing but spinning and weaving is taught? Are not these raw, partially educated and therefore ill-equipped young men likely to lose the battle?"

"During the last forty years or more, a number of experiments were tried in the field of national education. Can you point out at least one institution, the model of which we can proudly ask the Government to imitate?"

"The whole world is advancing in material civilization, without which we shall certainly be handicapped. It is now a settled fact that India fell a prey to western nations because she was wanting in scientific and material progress. History has taught this lesson and and it cannot be overlooked. But you never seem to give much importance to subjects like Physics and Chemistry. Is this not strange?"

I do not know the conditions of 1906 but I do know those of 1921. National education to be truly national must reflect the national condition for the time being. And as the national condition at present is one of uncertainty, national education too must remain in a more or less uncertain condition. How do children fare in a besieged place? Do they not according to their capacity take part in repelling the attack of the besiegers and suit themselves to the changing circumstances? Is that not, their true education? Is not education the art of drawing out full manhood of the children under training? The greatest drawback of the present system of education is that it does not bear the stamp of reality, that the children do not react to the varying wants of the country. True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not a healthy growth. The necessity of this response was the object of Non-co-

operation in education. True, we have not acted up to the ideal. That is because of our limitations, because we were unable to shake off the hypnotic effect of our surroundings.

But this is not to say that our educational institutions must become mere spinning and weaving institutes. I do regard spinning and weaving as the necessary part of any national system of education. I do not aim at taking the whole of the childrens' time for this purpose. Like a skilled physician I tend and concentrate my attention on the diseased limb knowing that that is the best way of looking after the others. I would develop in the child his hands, his brain and his soul. The hands have almost atrophied. The soul has been altogether ignored. I therefore put in a plea in season and out of season for correcting these grave defects in our education. Is half an hour's spinning every day by our children too great a strain upon them? Will it result in mental paralysis?

I value education in the different sciences. Our children cannot have too much of chemistry and physics. And if these have not been attended to in the institutions in which I am directly supposed to be interested it is because we have not the professors for the purpose and also because practical training in these sciences requires very expensive laboratories for which in the present state of uncertainty and infancy we are not ready.

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*2nd April, 1925*

## THE NATIONAL WEEK

BY M. K. GANDHI

The 6th and 13th of April must for ever remain green in Indian memory. 6th April 1919 witnessed an unexpected and huge mass awakening of the Nation. On 13th of April the nation was made to offer a sacrifice in which Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood mingled at Jallianwalla Bagh. They became one in death.

Since then much water has flown under the Sabarmati bridge. The nation has passed through many vicissitudes. Today Hindu-Muslim unity seems to have been but a dream. I observe that both are preparing for a fight. Each claims that it is preparing in self-defence. Each is in a measure right. And if they must fight, let them fight bravely, disdaining the protection of the police or the law courts. If they will do that the lesson of 13th April will not have been lost upon them. If we will cease to be slaves we must cease to rely for protection upon the British bayonet or the slippery justice of law courts. Not to rely upon either at the crucial moment is the best training for Swaraj. The supersession of Sir Abdur Rahim, the passage of the Supplementary Ordinance, the restoration of the salt tax tell us in plainest language that the British rulers propose to rule in spite of our opposition. In fact they tell us by their action as clearly as possible that they can and will rule without our assistance. Shall we not have the negative courage of doing without their assistance? We have seen that we can, when we do not quarrel. It is possible, if we have some courage, to do

without that assistance even if we quarrel. It is any day better to stand erect with a broken and bandaged head than to crawl on one's belly, in order to be able to save one's head. I can see Hindu-Muslim unity issuing out of our street fights without Government intervention. I should despair of real unity if we would fight under the shadow of the British Uniform and perjured evidence before British Courts. We must be men before we would rule ourselves.

But the Satyagraha week is pre-eminently one of self-purification and self-introspection. It is my fixed conviction, daily growing on me, that we shall not make this unhappy land happy except by purity of conduct which spelt otherwise means truth and non-violence. Such purity can come only by prayer and fasting. Hartal in the present state of things is out of question. I therefore suggest to those who believe in prayer and fasting to devote 6th and 13th to that sacred purpose. Khaddar and the wheel are the only universal programme in which young and old, rich and poor, men and women can usefully take part. Those who can spin should spin as much as they can and induce their friends to do likewise. Those who can will hawk Khaddar in their places and thus the week can be used as a week of dedication to this most important national work.

Hindus have also the impurity of untouchability to remove. They can fraternise with the untouchables. They can set apart what they can spare for the relief of distress among them and in a variety of ways make them feel that they are no longer the despised class among Hindus.

Hindu-Muslim unity, Khaddar and removal of

untouchability are to me the foundation for Swaraj. On that firm foundation it is possible to erect a structure nobler than which the world has not seen. Anything without that foundation will be like a building built on sand.

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*23rd April, 1925*

### NO SIGN YET

BY M. K. GANDHI

One of the numerous addresses presented to me in the South contains the following remarkable sentence:

"Though you have cried halt at Bardoli, we still cherish the hope that you will, in the near future, lead us to the battlefield, wherein we shall all subdue our differences in our fight for Swaraj, with the pure and unsullied weapon of non-violent mass Civil disobedience, without which, it is well-nigh impossible to attain Swaraj from the hands of an unwilling and greedy nation, whose imperialism is nothing but ruthless exploitation."

There is here a slight disappointment over the Bardoli decision. I know that many thought at the time, and still think, that the Bardoli decision was a political blunder of the first magnitude and showed my utter unfitness for political leadership. In my opinion, however, the Bardoli decision was a great service I rendered to the country. It showed on my part, not lack of political judgment, but abundance of political foresight. The lessons that we have learnt since were well-worth learning. If we had then earned a cheap victory, it would have cost us dear, and British Imperialism would have consolidated itself with fresh vigour. Not that it is not consolidated enough now.

But the consolidation then would have been far more effective.

Critics may say this is all argument based on probability. And so it is. But for me the probability borders on certainty. Any way, the Bardoli decision enables me to hope for a day, not far distant, when a fight will become a great probability. Any fight now to be undertaken must be a fight to the finish. But I must freely confess that there is nothing today on the Indian horizon to warrant the hope of early mass Civil disobedience. For one thing, there are not enough workers for organising such a struggle. It requires closer touch with the masses than we have yet shown ourselves capable of. It needs greater, warmer and continuous service of and identification with the masses than we have yet felt desirous of. We must feel and be one with the masses before we can expect successfully to lead them to a peaceful victory. Indeed when we have arrived at that stage, mass Civil disobedience will hardly be necessary. But we must have that confidence in ourselves. Today I, at any rate, have none. Any attempt at the present moment at mass Civil disobedience must result in undisciplined sporadic violence which will be put down the instant it breaks forth. But Civil disobedience does not admit of any violence or countenancing of violence directly or indirectly. The spinning wheel is undoubtedly designed to bring about that peaceful and calm atmosphere of solemn determination. It is the symbol of social service of the highest order. It is the cement to bind the masses to us national servants. It is a precursor of conscious co-operation on a scale hitherto unknown to the world. If the wheel fails, it means blank despair and

starvation for the masses. Nothing can so quickly put the masses on their legs as the spinning wheel and all it means. It is resistless in its march. It is innocence personified. It adds dignity to the poverty of the masses because it relieves it of its worst features. The wheel is making progress but not rapid enough for our purpose—not even for bringing about exclusion of foreign cloth from the country.

But there is no cause for despair. The wheel will weather many a storm and will come through them all scatheless. And as I have no other means but truth and non-violence for fighting India's battle for freedom, I must swear by it. Though, therefore, mass Civil disobedience is practically an impossibility, individual Civil disobedience is a possibility at any time. But even that time is not yet. There are too many dark and threatening clouds on the horizon that threaten to overwhelm us from within. The faith of the out and out believers in Charkha, removal of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim Unity has still to be tested to warrant a positive knowledge of who is who.

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*28th May, 1925*

## SENTIMENTAL NONSENSE

BY M. K. GANDHI

There is sentiment that is sensible and useful, such for instance, as love for one's country and consequent toil. There is sentiment which is nonsensical and useless. Of this latter kind is the following :

"I find myself between the horns of a dilemma. If I seek to remove the distress of my helpless mother and brothers I shall have to

resort to co-operation of some form or other with the Government (which I can never think of even in dream). On the other hand, if I strictly adhere to the doctrine of non-violent non-co-operation and devote myself to the service of the country, I shall have to see with my own eyes my relatives dying of starvation. After much deliberation I have come to the conclusion that I will not sacrifice non-co-operation nor will I leave my helpless family to its fate. The only course open to me is to take the vow of fasting to death in the moment of crisis for the salvation of mother-land and for the well-being of my family. Does religion sanction this kind of death? Do you approve of such a sort of death? I, however, prefer such death to the sacrifice of my truth. For, I know the support of my family is my sacred duty and at that same time the observance of the vow of non-co-operation for the sake of motherland is also a religious duty. I can avoid neither with impunity. I feel in my heart of hearts that better days will dawn upon us, but I do not know when. On the contrary, I shall never co-operate with this Government if Swaraj is never won in my life.

"It is a matter of great regret that the national schools that sprang up in 1921, have, with few exceptions, died out from the soil of Bengal. Khaddar has not yet found favour with our people. A national graduate like myself is treated with contempt and scorn. I do not mind ill-treatment. I have made myself proof against it. But the extreme misery of my family cuts me to the quick. Will you kindly give me light?

I sympathise with the young graduate, but I cannot help saying the suicide he suggests is a crime. All fasting is not meritorious. The candidate for self-immolation can, not only not advance Swaraj by his suicide, but of self-murder. It bespeaks want of faith in oneself. I honour the determination not to seek employment under the government. But surely, suicide is not the only alternative. If the national school in question does not support him, he has dozens of opportunities for earning an honest livelihood and supporting his parents. Has he the will to labour with his hands? I do not know a single honest and willing

worker who is unable to get suitable work in a national or public organisation or in a private firm. I know that national work awaits the willing though paid service of honest and industrious young men and women for its full development. The young man can become a weaver or a carpenter and earn fair wages. He can apply to, say, the Khadi Pratishthan and if he has the requisite qualifications, he would get employment there. A young man should never give way to despondency. He should have self-confidence enough to know that real merit never goes unrewarded.

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*25th June, 1925*

TO GANDHIJI

BY SIRDAR JOGENDRA SINGH

I feel diffident in writing to you about matters which have been engaging your mind and heart night and day all these years. Indeed, I confess I have hardly any claim to hazard an opinion except that I have been in close touch with life, and few people in the political world know the villages, as I do, which make real India. A voice from the villages may be of some use to you in reaching realities.

I had the pleasure of meeting you, in Lahore, many years ago, with Mr. Padshah. We discussed the economics of "Charkha" and power-driven machines. I disagreed with your view. I still feel that human nature in itself is not capable of working above and beyond the surrounding environment and the environment now embraces the whole world; none the less I admit that if human nature could find illumination for a while, simple living and high thinking point the surest road to happiness. I also see that if men learn to co-operate against things which they dislike and accept self-suffering, they can enforce their will wielding compelling powers without incurring the risk of devastations which follow wars and revolutions.

God entrusted you with a message, a message of freedom based on good-will, ensuring peace; saving civilisation from committing

"Hari Kari" by exploiting forces of nature without cultivating necessary discipline and moral restraint which from time immemorial has been held essential in the East. Give your message and time will carry it to the hearts of men. The love of your motherland calls you to apply your principles to the pressing problems of the day; you have been even persuaded to permit others to test a policy of pacts and compromises which appeal to the politicians more than the uncompromising pursuit of truth. They have been at it for a long while seeking to weld the people together by an agreed distribution of loaves and fishes and hoping to secure Swaraj by constant obstruction in the Legislatures. Failure has been pursuing these efforts from the start. I wonder if the leaders are disenchanted. In any case pursue your own path, it is your *Dharma*. You and they cannot walk the same road for long. The great work before you is to confine yourself to the essentials; prove that non-co-operation is co-operation in essence and stronger than the might of armies, that non-co-operation is co-operation of righteous men to overcome the unrighteous in a spirit of tolerance and goodwill, accepting self-suffering to awaken an understanding in the opponents. India needs it, but more than India Europe needs it, and indeed the whole world needs it. This alone can give the League of Nations strength to enforce its will. This alone can confer power on unarmed nations to assert their manhood and to keep their places in the sun. This alone can dispel darkness which drives nations into wards, in search of supremacy at the sacrifice of protection and peace. The new world waits for this new message; proclaim it with all the power that God has given you.

The problem of food is as important as the problem of peace. When you placed Charkha on the banner of your flag you raised the symbol of economic independence of nations, great and small. Happiness is not to be found in wild pursuit of pleasure and possessions and unlimited production. These feed the flames of desire. Let each householder produce what he needs and then what he cannot produce let him procure from his neighbour in and outside the bounds of his own land. Let trade be an exchange of things, not wild exploitations by one nation of the other; an organised competition which must fail unless saved by a large-hearted readjustment of economic relations of the world. Let Charkha be as a symbol for practical purposes; we must modernise the village bringing electric power to its



service, to weave cloth, to pump water, to press oil and to do a thousand other services which some of our congested villages need, to secure enough food and clothing. You cannot be altogether unaware that no country can entirely escape the influence of the new age; an age of magic and machinery, ruled by new inventions and human nature. You can place new inventions in the hands of the village worker in his own home, you can transfuse a divine sense of service to elevate human nature. You can inculcate ethics of work, love and labour by reviving the system of "Kathas", to keep alive ideals and traditions which have saved India through centuries of unfavouring circumstances.

The greatest problem you have set your hand to is to bring harmony between Hindus and Mussalmans. I am sure you will not exclude Englishmen from this great concord of hearts and minds. I fear, you have been exploring the possibilities of pacts and political arrangement against your better reason and agreed to let your friends try the methods with which they are familiar. They have failed and you can now turn round and tell them to let you go your own way. You may not be followed today but truth shall conquer. Light up the flame of understanding by your example transfiguring unity by living it. No one can do more. Hindus and Mussalmans who have their eye on the main chance repeat the creed without conviction. They will never find unity. They want places of power. Leave them in the old familiar caves, dark with the darkness of ages. Turn to the villages, unity exists there already. Factors which work discords can be examined and removed—fetishes which have usurped the sanction of religion. Remove untouchability between Hindus and Mussalmans in the matter of food, give freedom to the Mussalmans to sacrifice cows if they so desire, open the Hindu temples to the Mussalmans to desecrate if they dare. When doors are flung open to them as friends allow them to carry their processions wherever they like and to cut the *peepul* trees. Let the Hindus not only tolerate but join these processions and let the Mussalmans also do the same—allow the Hindus to blow their conches and unfurl their flag remembering in the words of Iqbal: "They are both companions on the long road and the night has over-taken them both."

Do this and rest will follow. This work has to be done in the villages, in the temples and the mosques and in the towns, wherever men of greater goodwill can be found. Let the order go forth that

“ Ye shall open their temples and the Mussalmans their mosques and partake freely in each others festivals. ”

The political problem is certainly important but more important is the serving of the needs of the people. There is a ploughing season and a sowing season and a harvesting season. A bad agriculturist ploughs his land badly, sows his seed and weeps when he turns to gather a harvest. A good agriculturist ploughs patiently and ploughs again and again and secures a rich harvest. We are still in the ploughing season. We need better education, more food, better houses and a larger coming together of races and creeds. The true worker never hurries. Modern methods made fully subservient to man and kept under control can add greatly to the production of the soil and the making of a better man morally and physically. Do something towards this. Make electric power the servant of man in the hearth and home and the fields outside, helping every man to attain his manhood. Preach your doctrine of love and self-determination and freedom. Man is the master of his own destiny and in his realisation all immediate problems will find an easy solution. I have made suggestions not that I know more but only because it may help you to know what people need. Politics often have a trick of wrapping truth in a veil of mystery and giving to what is temporary and unimportant preference over the permanent and deeply important.

I have much pleasure in printing the foregoing as received. Sirdar Jogendra Singh has written from the depth of his heart. I value his advice. I have a vivid recollection of the conversation referred to by the Sirdarji. He questions the advisability of my having entered into the agreement with the Swarajists. Nine months have nearly gone by since it was entered into. But I have seen no reason to repent of the agreement. I have sacrificed no principle. The Congress is no preserve of any single individual. It is a democratic body with, in my opinion, the widest intelligent franchise the world has ever seen. For it gives statutory recognition to the dignity of labour. I wish it was the sole test. It accommodates all shades of opinion save violence and

untruth. The swarajists had a perfect right of enforcing their will by a battle of votes. I was unprepared for it; for I have known the voting power to demoralise the people, especially when the electorate has not been accustomed to use independent judgment. I was bound as a sane man to recognise the growing power of the Swarajists. They were willing to give the predominant place to the constructive programme. More could not be expected from them. If I had forced them to the vote they might not only have made Council-entry the national programme but they might, in the heat of battle, have even thrown overboard the constructive programme or relegated it to an insignificant place. So much for the principle.

In practice the agreement has largely laid to rest the acerbity between pro-changers and no-changers. It has enabled both to work the joint programme in tolerable harmony. I witnessed the benefits of the pact in the South. I witness them in Bengal. I do not share the opinion that Swarajists have failed. I do not attach much importance to promises made at the hustings. It is the tacitly recognised law that like promises made at marriage, those made at election times must not be taken too seriously. Once grant the promise that Council-entry is not wholly bad, the Swarajists have nothing to be ashamed of about their achievements. They have spoken fearlessly in the Council halls; they have outvoted the Government; they have shown that the Government does not enjoy the confidence even of the electorate of its own creating; they have shown a discipline and solidarity hitherto unknown among Councillors and above all (for me at least) they have introduced Khaddar in these forbidden places and have

not been afraid to appear in their daily national costume which at one time, as if we were ashamed or afraid of it, we wore only in our homes. Have not the proceedings of the Swarajists set the Government athinking? It is true that it has gone its way in the face of hostile votes. The Swarajists could not help it. If they had the power behind, they would have dislodged the Government and dared it to defy their vote. That power has still to come. It is coming slowly but surely. The Government knows that it dare not act against public opinion for all time. The Swarajists have made it feel more than before the weakness of its position. I have political differences with them but their bravery, discipline, patriotism, command my admiration. And I should do all in my power consistently with my principles to help and strengthen them. I remain as the head of the Congress only so long as it pleases them to keep me there. Where I cannot help, I must resolutely refuse to hinder.

For me personally, non-violent non-co-operation is a creed. I heartily endorse the Sirdarji's statement that non-co-operation is co-operation in essence and stronger than the might of armies. And if I could but convert the major part of educated India to my view, Swaraj can be had without further effort. The conviction is daily growing stronger that there is no peace for India and indeed for the world, save through non-violence. For me, therefore, the spinning wheel is not merely a symbol of simplicity and economic freedom but it is also a symbol of peace. For if we, Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews unite in achieving the universalisation of the wheel in India, we shall not only have arrived at real unity and ex-

clusion of foreign cloth but we shall also have acquired self-confidence and organising ability which render violence wholly unnecessary for regaining our freedom. Success of the Charkha to me therefore means victory of non-violence such as to serve as an object lesson for the whole world.

The Sirdarji advises the introduction of electric power in the villages side by side with the Charkha. I fear he knows only a few villages of the Punjab. If he knew the life of all India as I claim to do, he would not write of electricity with the assurance he does. In the present state of India, anything like a universal introduction of electric power in our villages is an utterly impracticable proposition. That time may come. But it will not be before the Charkha occupies an abiding place in every home. I am anxious therefore to avoid fogging the public mind by raising side or false issues and false hopes. Even if Charkha means no more than what the Sirdarji says or implies we must concentrate upon it and it alone, till we have made it a success. And when through it we have made the lives of the villagers livable and have provided them with honourable and profitable work during the slack season all the things that should be added to make them happier will follow as a matter of course. Let me assure the Sirdarji that I am not against machinery as such. The Charkha itself for that matter is machinery. But I am a determined foe of all machinery that is designed for exploitation of people.

The Sirdarji need not entertain any fear of Englishmen being excluded from the circle of unity. For it includes everyone who chooses to call himself an Indian whether by birth or adoption. It includes all denomi-

nations and all races. Nor is the combination intended to be hostile to any nation or individuals, not even a Dyer. For it seeks to convert not to destroy.

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6th August, 1925

### IS IT INCONSISTENCY?

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following letter addressed by Mr. Gandhi to the *Statesman* and published in its issue of the 1st instant, being of general interest, is reproduced below:

You will perhaps extend me the courtesy of finding room for a reply to your article headed "Civil Resistance" in to-day's *Statesman*. You see an inconsistency between my desire to prepare an atmosphere for civil resistance and my statement to the European Association that I was dying for co-operation. My speech before the European Association was delivered on July 24. I write for *Young India* on Saturdays for the issue of Thursday following. The reference to civil resistance which you have quoted appears in *Young India* of July 23. Therefore, that article was written on Saturday previous i.e., July 18. I give you the dates in order to show that the idea of preparation for civil resistance was not conceived after the statement to the European Association.

I see no inconsistency between the desire for civil resistance and for co-operation. You will remember that my statement to the European Association was a recalling of an old story. When in the heyday of Non-co-operation, an Englishman twitted me with the remark that although I professed Non-co-operation I was dying to cooperate, I said to him emphatically that I was doing

so. And I say that that is my position also today. Civil resistance to wrong is not a new doctrine or practice with me. It is a life-long belief and a life-long practice. To prepare the country for civil resistance is to prepare it for non-violence. To prepare the country for non-violence is to organize it for constructive work, which to me is synonymous with the spinning wheel. You evidently seem to think that I have repented of my Non-co-operation or civil resistance. I have never done so. I remain a confirmed Non-co-operator. If I could carry educated India with me I would declare Non-co-operation in its entirety today. Being a practical man I recognize the facts that stare me in the face: I have failed to convince some of my most esteemed colleagues that the particular form of Non-co-operation which we embarked upon in 1920 can do good to the country at the present moment. It, therefore, remains under suspension. But I cannot hide from you the fact that if I could reconvert my colleagues, I would certainly ask the Congress to renew the battle.

Personally I have no desire to co-operate voluntarily with the Government in my weakness; that would be the co-operation of a slave. I admit my weakness; and, therefore, I remain satisfied with the mere desire for cooperation and I seek to fulfil that desire by developing strength. If I believed in violence I would make no secret of it and would take the consequence. But I would let the country know publicly, and know in unequivocal terms that there is no freedom for her and no room for honourable co-operation with the Government, unless she is prepared to match the British bayonet with the Indian. As it is, I do not believe in the creed of the bayonet. I further believe that, fortunately or

unfortunately, it will never succeed in India. A substitute for it is, however, necessary, and that is civil resistance.

In your opinion it is as dangerous as violence, and if such is also the opinion of the Government it has to suppress me, for after my discharge from prison I have not allowed a moment to pass when I have not endeavoured to fit myself or the country for civil resistance. Let me inform you in all humility that if I could but secure the absolute co-operation of my revolutionary friends by the entire cessation of their activity, and if I could produce an atmosphere of general non-violence, I would declare mass civil resistance to-day and thus prepare the ground for honourable co-operation. I admit that I failed to do so in 1921, and when I found that Chauri Chaura betrayed me, I had no hesitation within twenty-four hours of the declaration of civil resistance to suspend it, and to take the consequences of a general depression in the country that followed.

And if I insist *ad nauseam* on Hindu-Muslim unity, and the spinning wheel and Khaddar, it is in order to ensure a state of non-violence necessary for civil resistance. I have, I confess, despaired of achieving Hindu-Muslim Unity in the very near future untouchability is surely but slowly going, the spinning wheel is surely but slowly making its way. Meanwhile, the ruthless exploitation of the country is proceeding apace. I am, therefore, thinking out plans of some form of effective individual civil resistance, which, if it brings no relief to this poor country, will at least bring some solace, to those whose creed is non-violence, to know that they have left no stone unturned to help the deliverance of the country from a bondage which is enervating a whole nation.



I confess again that I have no ready-made plan, for, if I had I would not keep it from you or the country. But I am giving you the whole of the working of my mind. I have no desire to obtain or retain the goodwill of Englishman under false pretences. Even as the Government abates no precaution or preparation for ensuring its existence and stability, when it may be offering terms to Indian politicians, even so do I want my country to abate no effort to arm herself with a weapon on which she may rely when the Government fails to respond to its wishes.

You may know (for the communication is published) that Deshabandhu did not sign Dr. Besant's manifesto on her Bill, one of the grounds for which was that there was no sanction stipulated for in the event of rejection. That sanction was to be civil resistance. Will you have the country's manhood absolutely paralysed and rendered utterly ineffective for any resistance, violent or non-violent, before the British Government can possibly think of offering any terms or considering proposals that might be made by the Swarajya Party or any other? If so, I assure you, no self-respecting Indian will voluntarily be party to a condition so degrading.

*6th August, 1925*

### TEACHERS' CONDITION

BY M. K. GANDHI.

A deputation from the All Bengal Teachers' Association waited upon me sometime ago and asked me to advise them how they could better their condition and

be of service to the country. They admitted that at the present moment they were not doing much good to the country. This is how they described their condition: "The teachers are now engaged in performing a thankless task under a heavy personal sacrifice. They are imparting an education which is unprofitable and uninteresting through no fault of their own. They are to mechanically follow a curriculum of studies which provides for no religious, moral and vocational training. The education given today in Bengal through nearly 900 schools and by 20,000 teachers is domineered over by an examination system which only encourages cramming. The teachers are looked down upon as they are miserably underpaid. There is a large number of cases of mutual distrust and lack of sympathy between the teachers and the school authorities as well as the guardians. Education does not provide for physical training and is imparted through the foreign medium, resulting in a huge waste of national energy."

To all this the teachers might have added that the pupils are devitalised and have lost all initiative. I gave them an answer which satisfied them for the time-being but they took from me a promise that I would deal with the problem in these pages.

In my opinion the root of the evil lies in the foreign domination, and the root of foreign domination lies in ourselves. I am aware that we shall never deal with these problems unless and until we deal with the root-evil. If we had our own government, the teachers would be able to vindicate their position. Having our own government means a government never strong enough to override by force of arms the wishes of the majority, in other words a government responsible to

public opinion. To-day the teachers have public opinion behind them in many things but it is helpless against a power that is armed for dealing with any possible physical combination on the part of the people of India. No government in the world is so irresponsible and so unresponsive to the opinion of the millions of men and women of India as the Government of India. It was the realisation of this fact that made Gokhale postpone everything else to the effort for winning self-government. Lokamanya was so impatient that he made his formula, "Swaraj is my birthright" ring from one end of India to the other. He suppressed his taste for scholarship and philosophy in favour of Swaraj. Deshabandhu laid down his life in the same pursuit. All those who are like the teachers have, therefore, no remedy for their disease save that of gaining Swaraj as quickly as possible. How is that to be attained? I have pointed out the remedy and the country is supposed to have adopted it. The only change is that to the effort within must be added the effort without, viz, entry into the legislatures. The teachers cannot enter these institutions, they cannot take part in active politics but they can all spin or if they like do some other labour. They must not expect their pupils to labour, if the teachers will not labour themselves and I have suggested spinning because all can be engaged in it not for private profit but for discipline and national profit. Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life. Do the teachers realise that the pupils are an exaggerated edition of

what they themselves are? If they will have the initiative, the pupils will soon begin to have it. The examination system as it is, becomes doubly oppressive by reason of the mechanical method of instruction. Only the other day, inspecting a school, I asked a boy to tell me what and where Pataliputra—about which he had read to me from his book—was. He could not tell. This was neither the fault of the Government nor the pupils, assuredly the teacher's. Teachers can, if they will, make their tuition interesting and effective in spite of the deadening weight of the examination system. In spite of the medium of instruction being the English language in the higher classes it is open to the teachers to take care of the mother-tongue of the boys under them. There is no rule preventing them talking to the boys in their mother tongues. The fact is that most teachers do not know the vernacular names for technical expressions and find it difficult to make themselves intelligible in the vernacular when the subject of their discourse is technical. We have got into the very slovenly habit, in order as we fancy to give point to our conversations of using English adjectives, adverbs and even phrases of the English language. If the teachers wish it many of the defects of the present system could be cured by them.

I have given only a few out of many possible illustrations of what can be done under the present system. It was my recognition of the evil of the system that made me conceive non-co-operation, but a revival of it just now seems to be almost an impossibility. I am, therefore, recommending what is in some respects more difficult of accomplishment. It is easier for the average man to run away from evil than remain in it

and still remain unaffected by it. Many men can shun grog-shops and remain teetotallers, but not many can remain in these pestilential places and avoid the contagion.

However the teachers have asked for advice and I can but place it before them so that each may then respond to the best of his ability. The unfortunate position is that educated Indians take to teaching, not for the love of it, but because they have nothing better and nothing else for giving them a livelihood. Many of them even enter the teaching profession with a view to preparing for what they regard as a better thing. The wonder is that inspite of this self-imposed initial handicap so many teachers are not worse than they are. By well-ordered agitation no doubt they may better their pecuniary prospects, but I see no chance even under a Swaraj government of the scale of salary being raised much higher than it is today. I believe in the ancient idea of teachers teaching for the love of it and receiving the barest maintenance. The Roman Catholics have retained that idea and they are responsible for some of the best educational institutions in the world. The Rishis of old did even better. They made their pupils members of their families, but in those days that class of teaching which they imparted was not intended for the masses. They simply brought up a race of real teachers of mankind in India. The masses got their training in their homes and in their hereditary occupations. It was a good enough ideal for those times. Circumstances have now changed. There is a general insistent demand for literary training. The masses claim the same attention as the classes. How far it is possible

and beneficial to mankind generally cannot be discussed here. There is nothing inherently wrong in the desire for learning. If it is directed in a healthy channel it can only do good. Without, therefore, stopping to devise means for avoiding the inevitable, we must make the best use possible of it. Thousands of teachers cannot be had for the asking, nor will they live by begging. They must have a salary guaranteed and as we shall require quite an army of teachers their remuneration cannot be in proportion to the intrinsic worth of their calling but it will have to be in proportion to the capacity of the nation for payment. We may expect a steady rise as we realise the relative merits of the different callings. The rise must be painfully slow. There must, therefore, arise a class of men and women in India who will from patriotic motives choose teaching as a profession, irrespective of the material gain that it may bring them. The nation will not underrate the calling of the teacher. On the contrary, it will give the first place in its affection to these self-sacrificing men and women. And so we come to this that as our Swaraj is possible largely by our own efforts, so is the teachers' rise possible mainly by their own effort. They must bravely and patiently cut their way through to success.

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*8th October, 1925*

## FATE OF NON-CO-OPERATORS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend asks, 'With your complete surrender to the Swaraj Party what will be the fate of those who have made non-

co-operation their political religion?' The questioner forgets that I remain just as confirmed a non-co-operator as ever. And it is not only my political but it is also my domestic and social religion. As I have repeatedly said in these pages, voluntary and health-giving co-operation is impossible without the possibility of non-co-operation at a certain stage and under certain conditions. The Congress does not prescribe to anybody his religion. It is a sensitive barometer, from time to time registering the variation in the temperament of politically minded India. No Congressman is bound to act contrary to his political religion. But he may not now use the name of Congress for furthering non-co-operation. Under the resolution, the prestige and financial resources of the Congress where they are not earmarked are pledged for the support of furthering the Swarajist Council policy and therefore not only are Congress organisations entitled to vote supplies for the furtherance of the Swarajist policy but they are bound where they would spend money for Council propaganda at all to use them for the Swarajist policy. Conversely no Congress organisation where there is a clear majority against spending or raising money for any pure political work is bound by the resolution to do so contrary to their own belief. All Congress resolutions are for guidance and direction; they cannot be for coercion.

The correspondent further asks, 'What will be the position of the Spinners' Association with reference to Non-co-operation?' That association has nothing to do with political non-co-operation. The preamble precludes politics. I am the President of that association, not in my capacity as a confirmed non-co-operator but in that of an out and out Khadi lover. It is a commercial or economic association with philanthropic motives. It will conduct commerce in Khaddar not for the benefit of its members but of the nation. The members instead of receiving dividends will give yearly subscriptions in order that the nation may gain through their subscriptions. It invites the politically minded co-operators and non-co-operators, Rajahs, Maharajahs and persons belonging to all castes and creeds

who have faith in the economic capacity of the spinning wheel and Khaddar.

The correspondent adds, 'The programme of the Spinners' Association cannot be complete without the five-fold boycott.' I do not see it at all. Why may not the busiest lawyer at least wear Khaddar as some are now doing? Why may not the scholars and teachers of Government schools do likewise? The council-goers are certainly doing it, so far as the Swarajists are concerned. They have taken Khaddar to the Assembly and the Councils. Several titled men habitually wear Khaddar.

The last difficulty of my correspondent is, 'If the irreconcilable non-co-operators are driven out of the Congress and also find no place in the Spinners' Association, will it be possible for them to form an All-India Association of their own?' The question is extremely badly put. No one is ever driven out of the Congress. People may and do retire from it when they find the action of the majority to be in conflict with their conscience. The majority cannot be blamed for not suiting itself to the conscience of a minority. And if there are non-co-operators who consider it to be repugnant to their conscience to remain in the Congress while it countenances Council-entry they may certainly retire. I would even go further and suggest that they should retire if by remaining in the Congress they wish to hamper Council work. In my opinion the Congress machinery needs to be worked without any friction from within. I have already shown there is room for non-co-operators in the Spinners' Association as there is also for co-operators. If, in spite of it, there are non-co-operators who consider it their duty to form an All-India Association of their own, it is certainly possible for them to do so, but I would consider it to be thoroughly inadvisable. It is enough if the non-co-operators will for the time being carry on their non-co-operation in their own persons.



15th October, 1925 "

### NATIONAL EDUCATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

During my travels those who are interested in national education tell me that whereas I constantly harp upon Khaddar untouchability, Hindu Muslim unity, nowadays one rarely finds mention even of national education in *Young India*. As a matter of fact the statement is true, but it must not be cited as a ground of complaint against me, if only because I am directly interested in the largest national university in India. But national education is not a thing which can now be advanced by any writing on my part. Its advance depends totally upon a proper working of the institutions now in existence. We cannot, we must not, any longer appeal to the youth of the country who are now receiving education in the Government institutions to leave them for they now know the pros and cons of the subject. They are in Government institutions either out of weakness or out of their fondness for them or for their want of faith in national institutions. Whatever the reason, the only way to deal with their weakness fondness or want of faith is to make the national institutions strong and popular by sheer force of the character and ability of the teachers.

There is before me an appeal by the South Calcutta National School. In a covering letter I am reminded that I paid during my prolonged stay in Calcutta a hurried visit to the institution. The appeal is signed by influential men. Hand-spinning, I am reminded, is compulsory. There are one hundred boys on the rolls and eighteen teachers,—so the appeal runs. The school receives an annual grant of Rs. 200. There are many such institutions throughout the length and breadth of India from whose teachers I receive requests either for advertising them in these columns or better still becoming signatory to a direct appeal for funds. I must not yield to the temptation even at the risk of overlooking some very deserving institutions.

A hurried visit and an impression created by such a visit must not be allowed to harm an institution if the impression is bad. Nor must a false but favourable impression be allowed to bolster up an institution that is in reality undeserving. It is my settled conviction that no deserving institution ever dies for want of support. Institutions that have died have done so either because there was nothing in them to commend them to the public or because those in control have themselves lost faith, or which is perhaps the same thing, lost stamina. I would therefore urge the conductors of this and other such institutions not to give in because of the general depression. It is a time of test for worthy institutions. There are several at the present moment in India which are struggling against the heaviest odds where, though the teachers are living in want, they have faith in themselves and their cause, I know that they will prosper in the end and be the stronger for the ordeal they are passing through. I would advise the public to study such institutions and support them if they find them desirable and deserving.

I have observed in many institutions I have visited a tendency to patronize spinning because it has become somewhat of a fashion nowadays. It is far from doing justice to a great cause or to pupils. If spinning is to be revived as an indispensable industry, it must be treated seriously and must be taught in a proper and scientific manner like the other subjects taught in well-managed schools. The wheels will then be in perfectly good order and condition, will conform to all the tests laid down in these columns from time to time, the pupils' work would be regularly tested from day to day just as all their exercises would be or should be. And this is impossible unless all the teachers will learn the art with its technique. It is a waste of money to have a spinning expert. Every teacher has to become one, if spinning has to be effectively taught, and if the teacher believes in the necessity of spinning he can learn it without any difficulty in a month's time if he would give two hours to it daily. But I have said that whilst Charkha spinning may be taught so as to enable boys and girls if they wish to use the

spinning wheel in their own homes, for class-spinning the *Takli* is the most economical and the most profitable instrument. It is any day better that five hundred boys spin twenty five yards each for half an hour at a stated time daily than fifty boys at intervals spinning one hundred yards each in the same half hour. Five hundred boys will spin 12,500 yards daily on the *Takli* against 5,000 of fifty boys on the Charkha.

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5th November, 1925

### A HOTCH-POT OF QUESTIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have got some taxing readers of *Young India* who often ask inconvenient questions. But as they please them I must suffer the inconvenience and answer their questions, however vexing they may be. This is how a correspondent fires the first shot :

“Who is responsible for the word ‘Mahatma’ before your name of the list of Executive Councilors, A. I. S. A., as given in *Young India* of 1st October?”

The correspondent may depend upon it that the editor is not responsible for the appearance of the word Mahatma in the list of members of the Council of the A. I. S. A. Those who passed the Constitution are certainly responsible for it. Had I offered Satyagraha against it, the word might not have appeared. But I did not consider the offence to be serious enough to call for the use of that terrible weapon. Unless some catastrophe takes place the offensive word will always be associated with my name, and the patient critics must tolerate it even as I do.

“You say you live, in common with other fellow-workers, on the charity of friends who defray the expenses of Sabarmati Satyagrahasram. Do you think it proper for an institution of able-bodied men to live on the charity of friends?”

The correspondent has taken the word 'charity' too literally. Let him understand that every member of the institution gives both his or her body and mind to its work. But the institution can still be said to live on the charity of friends, because the latter get no return for their donations. The fruits of the labour of the inmates go to the nation.

"What is your view on what Tolstoy calls 'Bread-labour?' Do you really earn your living by your bodily labour?"

Strictly speaking bread labour is not a word of Tolstoy's coining. He took it from another Russian writer Bondarif, and it means that everyone is expected to perform sufficient body labour in order to entitle him to it. It is not therefore necessary to earn one's living by bread labour, taking the word living in its broader sense. But every one must perform some useful body labour. For me at the present moment spinning is the only body labour I give. It is a mere symbol. I do not give enough body labour. That is also one of the reasons why I consider myself as living upon charity. But I also believe that such men will have to be found in every nation who will give themselves body soul and mind to it and for their sustenance throw themselves on the mercy of their fellow men, that is, on God.

"I think that you have said somewhere that young men must simplify their wants and must ordinarily be able to live on Rs. 30 a month. Is it possible for educated youths to live without books, without travels, without even a wish to come into contact with great minds? All these things mean money. They must save something, too, to provide against circumstances of age, sickness, etc."

In well ordered society, such national servants as the correspondent refers to will have access to free libraries and the necessary travelling expenses will be paid by the nation, and the very nature of their work will bring them in contact with great minds. They will also be supported by the nation during sickness, old age, etc. This is no new conception, whether for India or elsewhere.

"You seem to advocate the starting of temples for Panchamas as a step in the direction of their amelioration. Is it not a fact that

the Hindu mind, confined for generations past within things like the "temple," has generally lost the power of any larger vision of God? When you seek to remove untouchability, when you seek to raise the 'untouchables' and accord them a place of freedom and dignity in society, need you do so by encouraging them to copy the present day caste Hindus even in the matter of the latter's vices, sins and superstitions? In the course of ameliorating the "untouchables," may we not also reform the Hindu community as a whole, so far at least as worship of temple gods is concerned? In the course of freeing the depressed classes from their present social disabilities, may we not seek also to free their mind and thought, and thus let social reforms bring into being a broader religious and intellectual outlook?

"It may be pointed out as a parallel case that the Khaddar propaganda to be really successful must not only aim at replacement of foreign cloth, but also seek to remove the non-national and anti-climatic fashions and tastes in dress, as indeed it has already done to some extent."

I do not regard the existence of temple as a sin or superstition. Some form of common worship, and a common place of worship appear to be a human necessity. Whether the temples should contain images or not is a matter of temperament and taste. I do not regard a Hindu or Roman Catholic place of worship containing images as necessarily bad or superstitious and a mosque or a Protestant place of worship being good or free of superstition merely because of their exclusion of images. A symbol such as a Cross or a book may easily become idolatrous, and therefore superstitious. And the worship of the image of child Krishna or Virgin Mary may become ennobling and free of all superstitions. It depends upon the attitude of the heart of the worshiper.

I do not see the parallel between the Khaddar propaganda and the building of temples for the so-called untouchables. But I grant the argument of the correspondent that the agitation against foreign cloth should include the giving up of unnecessary and harmful foreign fashions and tastes. But this does not need separate preaching. As a rule those who have adopt-

ed Khaddar have also eschewed such fashions and tastes in dress as are wholly unnecessary for our climate.

"I am under the impression that you supported the Khilafat cause because your brothers the Indian Muslims felt strongly about it. But is it just or right to help any cause without oneself being satisfied as to its intrinsic worth, simply because one's brothers rightly or wrongly feel keenly about it? Or was it the case that you were satisfied yourself that the Khilafat, as such, was a worthy right cause? If so, will you give your reasons, seeing that even modern Turkey has at one stroke done away with this institution which she presumably considers, is calculated to perpetuate a most unreasonable and virulent type of fanaticism in the Islamic world?"

The correspondent is quite correct in his contention that even a brother's cause has to be examined and proved to be just to one's satisfaction before one can help him. I was myself satisfied when I decided to throw in my lot with my Muslim brothers that their case was just. I must refer to the contemporary files of *Young India* for my reasons for considering the Khilafat cause to be just. Everything that modern Turkey does is not necessarily defensible. Further, Mussalmans may make whatever innovations they like in their practices. A non-Moslem cannot dictate innovations in Islam. All he can do is to examine the general morality of a system or practice before he defends it. I had satisfied myself that there was nothing intrinsically wrong in the institution of Khilafat. The correctness of the Islamic position was admitted by other non-Muslims including Mr. Llyod George himself and the institution was defended by me against non-Muslim attack.

"Were you not helping the cause of War when you, both while in Africa and here, enlisted men for field service? How does it tally with your principle of *Ahimsa*?"

By enlisting men for Ambulance work in South Africa and in England, and recruits for field service in India, I helped not the cause of war but I helped the institution called the British Empire in whose ultimate beneficial character I then believed. My repugnance to war was as strong then as it is

today; and I could not then have and would not have shouldered a rifle. But one's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another. As a citizen not then and not even now, a reformer leading an agitation against the institution of war, I had to advise and lead men who believed in war but who from cowardice, or from base motives or from anger against the British Government refrained from enlisting. I did not hesitate to advise them that so long as they believed in war and professed loyalty to the British constitution they were in duty bound to support it by enlistment. Though I do not believe in the use of arms, and though it is contrary to the religion of *Ahimsa* which I profess, I should not hesitate to join an agitation for a repeal of the debasing Arms Act which I have considered amongst the blackest crimes of the British Government against India. I do not believe in retaliation, but I did not hesitate to tell the villagers near Bettiah four years ago that they who knew nothing of *Ahimsa* were guilty of cowardice in failing to defend the honour of their women-folk and their property by force of arms. And I have not hesitated as the correspondent should know only recently to tell the Hindus that if they do not believe in out and out *Ahimsa* and cannot practice it they will be guilty of a crime against their religion and humanity if they failed to defend by force of arms the honour of their women against any kidnapper who chooses to take away their women. And all this advice and my previous practice I hold to be not only consistent with my profession of the religion of *Ahimsa* out and out, but a direct result of it. To state that noble doctrine is simple enough; to know it and to practice it in the midst of a world full of strife, turmoil and passions is a task whose difficulty I realise more and more day by day. And yet the conviction too that without it life is not worth living is growing daily deeper.

*The following notes by M. K. Gandhi appeared in Young India of 17th December, 1925 :*

## COUNCILS ENTRY

An American publicist writes : " I am sorry to see you support, in any way, going into the Councils. If you were right before you came to this position, you are wrong now. I have always likened Councils to a tin plate given to a baby with the statement : ' This is the moon, dear play with it ; all you wish. ' "

The writer reading scrappy bits from my writing, has evidently misunderstood my position. I hold to the same position that I occupied in 1920-'21 regarding Councils entry. I do not support going into the Councils. But I claim to be a practical man. I do not blind my eyes, and refuse to see facts that stare me in the face. I recognise that some of my best friends and co-workers who sailed in the same vessel with me in 1920-'21 have gone off the vessel and altered their course. They are as much representatives of the nation as I claim to be. I have therefore to determine the extent to which I can accommodate my course to theirs, and Councils entry being a fact which I cannot alter, I have had no hesitation in tendering to my colleagues, the Swarajists, such help as it is possible for me to give, just as, though pacifist myself, I cannot help sympathising with the brave Riffs as against the European usurpers.

## MALAVIYAJI AND LALAJI

An active member of the Hindu Mahasabha has sent me fifteen questions to answer in the pages of *Young India* and *Nāvajivan*. Another has discussed several matters after the style of these questions. I do not propose to answer all of them. But some of them I dare not avoid. They draw my attention to the attacks being made in the press on Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji and Lalaji. The questions put to me are : ' Do you question their good faith ? Do you regard them as being oppos-



ed to Hindu-Muslim unity either directly or indirectly? Do you consider them to be capable wilfully of doing harm to the country?' I do occasionally see the attacks made against these patriots. I know also that many of my Mussalman friends thoroughly distrust both these distinguished public men. But however much I may differ from them in many respects, I have never been able to distrust either of them. Indeed I have noticed among Hindu circles similar attacks on several prominent Mussalman workers as I have in Mussalman circles against Malaviyaji and Lalaji. I have not been able to believe either the one or the other charge. But I have not been able to carry home my belief to either party. Malaviyaji and Lalaji are both tried servants of the country, both have to their credit a long, unbroken and distinguished record of service. I have had the privilege of enjoying confidential relations with them, and I cannot recall a single occasion when I have found them to be anti-Muslim. Not that, therefore, they have not distrusted Mussalman leaders, or that their views and mine about the solution of the very difficult and delicate question have been identical. They have never questioned the necessity of unity, and they have ever according to their own lights, striven for it. In my opinion to question the good faith of these leaders is to doubt the possibility of unity. Their voices will count as effectively in Hindu society when we come to terms—as some day we must—as say, precisely, the voices of Hakim Saheb and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad will count in Muslim circles. Indeed my prescription to every public worker is to take every worker at his own word till there is positive proof to the contrary. A believer loses nothing even where he has been misled and cheated. Public life in the midst of suspicion and distrust becomes intolerable when it does not become impossible.

*24th December, 1925*

## TO WHAT STATE FALLEN

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is wonderful how when a person or an institution begins to recede from a position, the return takes him or it sometimes even below the original state. A correspondent says in effect: "From Non-co-operation, we are hurrying down to co-operation. Presently we shall perform an operation in amputation so that we have nothing but the useless trunk left! Here are some of the conditions imposed upon what was at one time a well-managed national school, if it is to receive Government recognition: The present Headmaster should not only resign, but should not be a member of the School Committee and should have nothing to do with the management in any shape or form. He must not live on the school premises. The boys and teachers must not take part in political meetings or in any anti-Government demonstrations. The rules governing the management should be so changed as to render Non-co-operation in future impossible. For another school which is awaiting recognition summary orders are said to have been issued that recognition cannot be granted unless certain books by well-known Indian writers have been removed from the school library, and other similar humiliating conditions are satisfied." This reminds one of the conditions that were imposed during the Punjab Martial Law days upon the dismissed scholars if they were to be re-admitted. It seems that the lesson of the Punjab has been lost upon the school masters and scholars. I can understand reaction against Non-co-operation because it appeared to be a new idea which could not be demonstrated to have succeeded, but servile co-operation such as the conditions imply is inexplicable. One would think that a national school, ill-conducted it may be, housed in an ill-constructed dilapidated building is any day superior to a well-conducted Government school housed in a glittering palace where neither the school-master nor the scholars can retain their self-respect.

*18th March, 1926*

## NOT DESPONDENT

BY M. K. GANDHI

I would also share with the reader my correspondent's optimism in giving me his reflections upon the present condition of political India. He says :

"As regards 'the things as I see them now', I am glad I do not feel as much disappointed as many of my friends do. I do not feel that Non-co-operation has failed or that we have seen its last. I still believe that India will get Swaraj in the near future and that the final victory is to be achieved through Civil Revolution. We may have to change our programme, but the salvation is to come through that source alone. I believe that the victory is to come to us in the near future. By near future, I do not mean one year, nor even five years, but certainly less than ten years; because I find the heart of the people still sound. What is wrong is with those who have to give lead to the people. It is the educated classes whom the common people generally look for guidance who have gone astray. If they could again realise their responsibilities, the masses would follow their footsteps as surely as the magnet follows the poles.

How nice it would be if all Non-co-operators were to share this correspondent's faith in Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience! He may see that though Non-co-operation has not brought us Swaraj in the tangible sense that the people understand, it has revolutionised our political aspect; has brought into being mass consciousness which, in my opinion, nothing else could have done. And there is no doubt about it that whenever freedom comes, it will come through some application of Non-co-operation including Civil Disobedience. For, inspite of whatever may be said to the contrary, the method of violence has no following worth the name especially among the masses, and no method for the attainment of Swaraj can possibly succeed unless the masses also adopt it. If the definition of Swaraj includes the freedom not of a certain number of individuals or certain classes but of the whole of the

masses of India, only Non-co-operation and all that it means can regulate that mass consciousness which is absolutely necessary for Democratic Swaraj. Only Non-violent, and therefore constructive methods, will weld the masses together and fire them with a national purpose and give them the desire and ability to achieve and defend national freedom.

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*8th April, 1926*

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

BY M. K. GANDHI

“You say that Swaraj can only come to us as the result of a bloody battle in the bad old way or through spinning away for all we are worth in our village homes in the good new way of the Mahatma. This is only another instance of hypnosis by a catch-word. What steps have been taken, by you or the others concerned, beyond mere repetition of the doctrine, to convince people that this spinning away (1) is possible, (2) is desirable, (3) will be effective? I have yet to see a plain, intelligible, fairly well-reasoned-out statement, answering doubts and questions; as to (1) whether it is possible, in view of the rent and revenue laws, to retain and detain the needed cotton within the country, and in the hand of the right persons; (2) whether and how far it is desirable to do so, in view of the effects of such a step, upon the other industries which have grown up; (3) whether it will be effectual, and if so directly requiring other steps, and, if so, what steps, to bring about Swaraj (whatever that might mean!) I have repeatedly tried to get leading exponents of the cult to thresh out the thing, pro and con, in public print, or even private discussion, but have failed so far. Only once I had an opportunity of questioning the fountain-head of the doctrine himself *vis.* Mahatmaji, and the opportunity was limited to putting only the question as to the possibility. He contented himself with simply saying, “Yes, it is possible.” There

were many other persons, and more important matters, to deal with; so my doubts and fears remained unallayed."

The preceding quotation is from an informing letter by Babu Bhagwandas to Maulana Mahomed Ali and published by him in the *Comrade*. Though it is to be found in an old issue (18th December last), I regret to say I saw it only during the current week. I may say at the outset that I do not remember the conversation referred to by Babu Bhagwandas. For me nothing in the political world is more important than the spinning wheel. I can recall many occasions when I have postponed other matters to make room for a discussion on the spinning wheel as central part of our economics or politics. But whatever fate overtook Babu Bhagwandas's question put to me when I had the privilege of being his guest, the root questions raised by him must be answered. That the spinning wheel is possible is being daily demonstrated with increasing force. Amid the many seeming impossibilities *e. g.*, Hindu-Muslim unity, the spinning wheel alone is being demonstrated as a possibility, as witness the growing organisations in Tamil Nad, Andhra, Karnataka, Punjab, Bihar, and Bengal etc. If the organisations are not more numerous, it is because the workers are too few. There is no inherent impossibility in the wheel. It has been worked before with the greatest success. There are millions who can work it, who have the required leisure for it and, who are in need of a cottage occupation.

That it is desirable may be proved from the mere fact that it is the best adopted for this vast country of seven hundred thousand villages.

No one can say with certainty whether it will be effective. If it is premissible to infer from the experience being gained in the several provinces, it can be safely asserted that it is highly probable that it will be effective. It can even be boldly asserted that no other industry has as yet been proved to be as effective as the spinning wheel for the purpose intended.

Babu Bhagwandas mentions the adverse effect of rent and revenue laws. He thereby draws attention to the difficulty, not

the impossibility of revival of the one national industry that gave the peasantry its staying power one century ago. Revenue and rent laws are not immutable. In so far as they interfere with the growth of the spinning industry, they must be altered. 'But' it will be said, 'they cannot be altered without Swaraj.' The answer is that Swaraj cannot be obtained without organising spinning inspite of the laws. For the fight for Swaraj means fighting difficulties however great they may be. Violence is the accepted though barbarous method of fighting. Organising the spinning wheel is the moral method of fighting for Swaraj. Organising the spinning wheel is the easiest and the cheapest method of peacefully organising the masses. Surely if cotton can be exported thousands of miles away, there spun, brought back in the shape of yarn for sale to the very exporters, there should be no difficulty about shifting it, in India itself, a few miles away from the seat of its cultivation. There is no difficulty about a non-rice-growing province importing rice from the rice-growing province. Why should there be any in so handling cotton? The process is going on today. Bihar has to import cotton from Wardha or Cawnpore.

But, says Babu Bhagwandas, it may be undesirable 'in view of the effects of such a step upon the other industries which have grown up.' What other industries? And if they are adversely affected, should that interfere with the prosecution of an industry which is as necessary to the national life as either lung is to the body? Should we be afraid to promote total prohibition because it must interfere with the established distilleries? Or must a reformer be deterred from advocating abstention from the opium habit for fear of harming the opium growers? Babu Bhagwandas cites the Champaran ryot who could not keep enough food grain for sustenance. That was because he had not enough for all his wants. If he had spun or if the taxation was light, he could have kept enough for his wants. He got partial relief by the removal of the burden of growing indigo compulsorily. He could still further better his condition if he would utilise his idle hours (he has many) by

spinning unless he found a more profitable industry. But he will not spin, unless the educated class set the fashion and assure him that the wheel is not to be a nine day's wonder.

Babu Bhagwandas however exclaims :

"If to spin away is so easily possible, so desirable, so effective, there must after all be some reason why the three-hundred millions don't take to it at once, why the Congress membership has dwindled down to nine thousand odd."

Surely he knows many things 'possible, desirable, and effective,' not happening for want of will or effort. Universal education is 'possible, desirable and effective' but people do not resort to it readily. And, it will require the energy of an army of trained workers to instil into the minds of the people the necessity of taking the trouble to be educated. Sanitary precautions are 'possible, desirable and effective'. But why do the villagers not take to them as soon as they are brought to their notice? The answer seems to be simple. Progress is slow. It is lame. It requires effort, organisation, time and expense in exact proportion to its importance. The greatest stumbling block in the way of the more rapid progress of spinning, great as it is, is the disinclination or the inability of the cultured classes, the natural leaders of the people, to recognise the supreme place the spinning wheel has in any scheme of national regeneration. The very simplicity of it seems to bewilder them.

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*27th May, 1926*

ITS MEANING

BY M. K. GANDHI

On my return from Mahabaleshwar I was waylaid, though by previous appointment, by fellow non-co-operators. I had limited myself strictly to visiting patients during this unexpected visit to His Excellency the Acting Governor at Mahabaleswar.

And so before reaching Poona station I had arranged just to go to Prof. Trivedi's house to see my young friend Manu who among others had been to me at the Sassoon Hospital in Poona in 1924 an angel of mercy. It was during this visit that I had to divide my time between Manu and the non-co-operators. The latter had the lion's share of it. Manu disengaged me in a few minutes. I envied him as a patient. For though he has been laid up in bed for over six months, I found him quite cheerful and resigned. I had therefore no compunction about leaving him for a chat with non-co-operating friends.

"How can you go to the governor and call yourself a non-co-operator?" was the question with which I was greeted.

"I knew what your ailment was," said I. "I shall answer all your questions fully, but on condition that nothing of what I say is to be published by you. If I find it advisable, I shall deal with the matter in the pages of *Young India*."

"Yes, we won't publish anything and shall be satisfied if you will answer our questions in *Young India*. Not that I have any doubt about the propriety of your action," added the questioner. "but I represent a large number of non-co-operators whom you often confound by your unexpected acts."

"Well, then, let me have all your questions and I shall endeavour to answer them though I confess that it will be all a waste of time. For I feel that time is past for explanations and persuasion. Non-co-operators must instinctively know that I am not likely to do anything contrary to our code. And if I do,—for I admit I am liable to err,—they must disown me and remain firm in their own convictions. They may have derived their non-co-operation from me but if they have assimilated it, their convictions must not depend upon mine. It must be independent of me and my weaknesses and errors. If I turn traitor or to put it mildly, if I alter my opinion, they must be ready to denounce me and still abide by their own convictions. That is why I say that our conversation will be a waste of national time. Convinced non-co-operators know their task. Let them fulfil it. But let me have your questions."



"It has been suggested in Bombay that you went to the Governor uninvited, in fact you forced yourself upon his attention. If so, was it not co-operation even without response? what could you have to do with the Governor, I wonder?"

"My answer is that I am quite capable even of forcing myself upon the attention of my opponent when I have strength. I did so in South Africa. I sought interviews after interviews with General Smuts when I knew that I was ready for battle. I pleaded with him, to avoid the untold hardships that the Indian settlers must suffer, if the great historic march had to be undertaken. It is true that he in his haughtiness turned a deaf ear; but I lost nothing. I gained added strength by my humility. So would I do in India when we are strong enough to put up a real fight for freedom. Remember that ours is a non-violent struggle. It pre-supposes humility. It is a truthful struggle and consciousness of truth should give us firmness. We are not out to destroy men. We own no enemy. We have no ill-will against a single soul on earth. We mean to convert by our suffering. I do not despair of converting the hardest-hearted or the most selfish Englishman. Every opportunity of meeting him is therefore welcome to me.

"Let me distinguish. Non-violent non-co-operation means renunciation of the benefits of a system with which we non-co-operate. We therefore renounce the benefits of schools, courts, titles, legislatures and offices set up under the system. The most extensive and permanent part of our non-co-operation consists in the renunciation of foreign cloth which is the foundation for the vicious system that is crushing us to dust. It is possible to think of other items of non-co-operation. But owing to our weakness or want of ability, we have restricted ourselves to these items only. If then I go to any official for the purpose of seeking the benefits above-named I co-operate. Whereas if I go to the meanest official for the purpose of converting him, say to Khaddar, or weaning him from his service or persuading him to withdraw his children from

Government schools, I fulfil my duty as a non-co-operator. I should fail if I did not go to him with that definite and direct purpose.

"Now for the case in point. I went to the acting Governor at his instance. He wrote to me not as Governor nor for any purpose connected with his office as Governor. He invited me to go to Mahableswar to discuss with him agricultural matters. As I explained some time ago in the pages of *Navajivan*, I told him that I could not be indentified with the Royal Commission in any way, that I was still confirmed in my views on non-co-operation and generally had no faith in Commissions. I added further that it would suit me to see him when he descended to the plains. His Excellency therefore wrote saying it would suit him to meet me in June. But subsequently he changed his mind and sent a message that it would suit him better if I could go to Mahableswar. I had no hesitation in going there. We had two very pleasant and long talks. And you are entitled to guess (and that correctly) that our talk revolved round the Charkha. That was the central theme. And I could not discuss agriculture without discussing the terrific cattle problem!"

I have given but a brief summary of the pleasant conversation I had with the no-change friend. In parts I have amplified my answer in order to make it more intelligible to the general reader.

There were many other points discussed, of which I must mention one or two. I was asked to give my opinion on the Sabarmati pact. I refused to say anything for publication. I must not add to the existing bitterness by entering into the controversy. I can say nothing that would bring the parties together. They are all my co-workers. They are all patriots. The quarrel is purely domestic. It behoves me as a humble servant of the country to be silent where speech is useless. I prefer therefore to wait and pray. I was told that I was misrepresented. I must own that I have studiously avoided reading the literature about the pact. I am

used to misrepresentation all my life. It is the lot of every public worker. He has to have a tough hide. Life would be burdensome if every misrepresentation had to be answered and cleared. It is a rule of life with me never to explain misrepresentations except when the cause requires correction. This rule has saved much time and worry.

"But what should we do when all accept offices and what should we do at the forthcoming elections?" was the last question.

My answer was :

'When the acceptance of office by all parties becomes a settled fact, I presume those who have conscientious scruples will refrain from voting altogether. At the forthcoming elections, too, those who have conscientious objections will refrain. The others will naturally follow the Congress lead and vote as the Congress directs. I have given my definition of a Congressman already in these pages. Not every man who says 'I am a Congressman' is such, but only he who does the will of the Congress.

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*17th June, 1926*

## THE POSITION OF NON-CO-OPERATORS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend asks :

"In the midst of so many parties in the country we hardly see where to set our feet. When so many parties are being formed, is it not desirable that those few who still believe in the boycott of Councils, Hindu-Muslim unity etc. should consolidate their forces and re-declare their ideals? We are being accused of having turned our backs on Swaraj and our creed of Non-violence is being openly sneered at. At every step we are being taunted that we are wasting our time and energy. I admit that one need not be disturbed by taunts, but it does appear desirable to

organise ourselves and call upon those who are of our way of thinking to join us. How long are we to have patience? How long must our faith be tried?"

If patience is worth anything, it must endure to the end of time. And a living faith will last in the midst of the blackest storm. Non-violence acts in a manner contrary to violence. I cannot advise the formation of an additional party. Non-violent Non-co-operation can and must stand without an organised party. Non-violent Non-co-operation is on its trial. Let each one who has faith in boycott of Councils, law-courts, etc., stand firm even though he may be alone in his own district. Khaddar and national schools should satisfy every one who wants an occupation. The facts and figures I am reproducing from week to week from reports received from various Khadi centres must convince the most sceptical of the progress that Khadi is making, surely though slowly. And the progress that is now being made is not due to any momentary enthusiasm but it is due to a reasoned faith in Khadi. If Non-co-operators have faith in Non-violent Non-co-operation they will know that it is not dead but it is very much alive and that it will give a good account of itself when the darkest cloud threaten the horizon. It will be found then to be the one sheet-anchor of India's hope.

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17th June, 1926

### MESSAGE TO THE STUDENTS

*The Gujarat Mahavidyalaya opened, after the last summer vacation, on June 14th, with an address from Gandhiji which, it being his day of silence, was read for him. The following is the translation :*

"1921 and 1926—What a difference ?

Please do not think that I am striking a melancholy note. We are not going back, our country is not going back. We have gone five years nearer Swaraj and there can be no doubt

about it. If some one say that it was very nearly achieved in 1921 and today it is far away, no one knows how far, do not believe it. Prayerful well-meaning effort never goes in vain, and man's success lies only in such an effort. The result is in His hands.

Strength of numbers is the delight of the timid. The valiant of spirit glory in fighting alone. And you are all here to cultivate that valour of the spirit. Be you one or many, this valour is the only true valour, all else is false. And the valour of the spirit cannot be achieved without Sacrifice, Determination, Faith and Humility.

We have built our Vidyalyaya on the foundation of self-purification. Non-violent Non-co-operation is one aspect of it. The 'non' means renunciation of violence and all that stands for it, *i. e.* all Government control. But so long as we do not co-operate with our 'untouchable' brethren, so long as there is no heart-unity between men of different faiths, so long as we do not co-operate with the millions of our countrymen by according to the spinning wheel and Khaddar the sacred place they deserve, the negative prefix is entirely negatory. That non-co-operation will not be based on *Ahimsa* but *himsa i. e.* hatred. A negative injunction without a positive obligation is like body without soul, worthy to be consigned to the flames. There are 7,000 railway stations for the 7,00,000 villages of India. We do not even claim to know these 7,000 villages. We know only through history the condition of villages not within easy reach of railway stations. The only loving tie of service that can bind the villagers to us is the spinning wheel. Those who have not yet understood this basic truth are in this institution to no purpose. The education is not 'national' that takes no count of the starving millions of India and that devises no means for their relief. Government contact with the villages ends with the collection of revenue. Our contact with them begins with their service through the spinning wheel, but it does not end there. The spinning wheel is the centre of that

service. If you spend your next vacation in some far-off village in the interior you will see the truth of my remark. You will find the people cheerless and fear-stricken. You will find houses in ruins. You will look in vain for any sanitary or hygienic conditions. You will find the cattle in a miserable way, and yet you will see idleness stalking there. The people will tell you of the spinning wheel having been in their homes long ago, but today they will entertain no talk of it or of any other cottage industry. They have no hope left in them. They live, for they cannot die at will. They will spin only if you spin. Even if a hundred out of a population of 300 in a village spin, you assure them of an additional income of Rs. 1,800 a year. You can lay the foundation of solid reform on this income in every village. It is easy I know to say this, but difficult to do. Faith can make it easy. 'I am alone, how can I reach seven hundred thousand villages?'—This is the argument that pride whispers to us. Start with the faith that if you fix yourself up in one single village and succeed, the rest will follow. Progress is then assured. The Vidyalaya wants to make you workers of the type. If it is a cheerless job, the Vidyalaya is indeed cheerless and fit to be deserted.

You will see that we open this term with a few changes in our staff. Acharya Gidwani whose sacrifice rendered the opening of this College possible, and who won the affection of students, has at my instance accepted the office of Principalship of Prem Maha Vidyalaya, Brindaban. I know that students were agitated over this. I congratulate them on their devotion to their principal. I give you today the consolation that I gave the students that saw me the other day. We have to put up with these partings. We can but treasure the good things of our loved ones and follow them. Rest assured that we have done everything in the interests of the College. Fortunately we have Sjt. Nrisinhaprasad to serve us as Vice-Chancellor. He has lived with students for years and he often comes in contact with you. Trust yourselves to him. My doors

are always open for every one of you. It has been a constant source of sorrow to me that I have not been able to come as closely in contact with you as I have wished.

Professors Athavle, Dalal, Mazumdar and Shah have left the College. Their resignations were unavoidable. It is to be regretted that we shall no more have the benefit of their scholarship. But in their stead we have as Professors Sjts. Kikubhai, Janabhai Desai, Nagindas, Gopaldas and Gandhi. They are all ex-students of the Vidyalaya and well may we take a pardonable pride in the fact. Let their industrious scholarship be a source of honour to us. May God bless you with long life for the selfless service of the country.

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*15th July, 1926*

## STUDENTS AND NON-CO-OPERATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

A student in a national college has written a long letter of which I give the substance as follows :

“ You are aware that in the year 1920 many students all over India left Government-controlled institutions. Several National institutions were started. Some have already gone under. The one that I know is a poor affair. It may be called a foreign imitation under national control minus discipline. Many of our teachers do not know the distinction between Khaddar and foreign or mill-made cloth. They dress like sahebs and though themselves dressed in foreign cloth would not mind talking to us about Swadeshi. They remind one of drunkards advising others to give up liquor. They talk of the spirit of sacrifice and the value of joining national institutions when they send their own sons or other relatives to Government-controlled schools or colleges. In fact, there is very little love lost between them and us. Do you

wonder at many students having gone back to Government institutions? A few of us however still remain out. But how long can we do so? I would like to prosecute my studies in Germany, but, my pecuniary circumstances do not allow me to do so. Can you not send me to the Berlin or any other European University?"

The writer has given me his own full name and the name of the institution and all other available particulars. I have purposely refrained from giving the name or the institution and further particulars. For, I do not know enough of it and I could not be party to the specific condemnation of any institution without having studied it. Public purpose is sufficiently served by publishing the general complaint so that those institutions to which the complaint may be applicable may examine themselves and remove all cause of complaint. There is no doubt that in several national institutions things have not been as they should have been and that the professors or teachers have not conformed to the elementary requirements of the Congress programme in so far as it is applicable to national institutions. Teachers who themselves do not believe in non-violence or truth or non-co-operation, cannot impart to their students the spirit of any of these things. If they send their children to Government schools, they may not expect to enthuse their pupils over national institutions. Nor may they expect to infect their pupils with love of the Charkha or Khaddar, if they will not spin themselves or wear Khaddar. It is hardly necessary to remark that all national institutions do not deserve the description that the writer gives of the one to which he has belonged. But, the point I desire to emphasise in connection with this letter is that there should be no sorrow felt over one's sacrifice. That sacrifice which causes pain loses its sacred character and will break down under stress. One gives up things that one considers to be injurious and therefore there should be pleasure attendant upon the giving up. Whether the substitute is effective or not is a different question altogether. If the substitute is effective,



it is no doubt well, but, it is well also even if the substitute is ineffective. It must lead to an effort to procure a better substitute, but surely not to a return to what has been given up after full knowledge and experience of its harmful character. This hankering after going to Berlin or to some other European University is not a sign of the spirit of non-co-operation. It is on a par with substituting Japanese cloth for the English manufacture. We give up English cloth not because it is English but because it robs the poor of their hereditary employment and therefore makes them poorer still. The Japanese substitute robs the poor no less than the English cloth. Similarly, we give up Government institutions because of their harmful character. We may not, therefore, reproduce the same thing under a different name and hug to ourselves the belief that we are non-co-operators. Non-co-operation means co-operation with all that is best in the Indian spirit. We cannot cultivate that taste by being in Berlin. It is in India that all our experiments must be made. Till at least we arrive at a complete and effective substitute, the first step, it is quite plain, must be the giving up of Government institutions. Those students, therefore, who took that step did well if they understood what they were doing. And only the sacrifice of such students will be of increasing benefit to the country as time passes. But those who are repenting or dissatisfied with their own lot should certainly have no hesitation in going back to Government institutions. After all it is a conflict of ideal and if the ideal that Non-co-operation stands for is good and is congenial to the Indian soil, it will triumph over every conceivable obstacle.

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*29th May, 1924*

## CONGRESS ORGANISATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

As I have said in my statement\* to the Press on the question of Councils entry, it is not complete without an examination, in the light of my views, of the working of the Congress organisation. The difference between the Swarajists and myself is honest and vital. I believe that the frank recognition of honest differences will accelerate the country's progress as a patched up compromise designed to hide differences would have retarded it. Each party is now free to give the fullest play to its views unhampered by any consideration save that of the common cause.

It is, therefore, necessary to consider the way the Congress organisation is to be worked. It is clear to me that it cannot be jointly worked just as a government cannot be jointly and efficiently carried on by two parties with opposite views. I hold the boycott of titles etc. to be an absolutely integral part of the Congress programme. The boycott has two objects : first, to persuade those who hold titles etc., to give them up ; secondly, to keep the Congress pure from the influence of the institutions boycotted. If the first had been immediately successful, we should have attained our goal at once. But the second is equally necessary, if we are ever to reach our goal through the programme of non-violent non-co-operation. For me the boycott is national so long as the National Congress enforces it in its own organisation. It cannot undermine the influence, the glamour and the prestige of Government institutions, if it cannot be run without the presence in it, as administrators, of title-holders, lawyers, school-masters and councillors who represent as it were, the voluntary branch of the Government administration. The idea running behind the programme of non-co-operation was that if we could

\* Omitted in this collection.

honestly, non-violently and successfully work the Congress organisation without such influence, and, nay, even in spite of it, that fact by itself would be enough to give us Swaraj. Our numerical superiority is so great that an effective boycott carried out by the National organisation must make the Congress an irresistible power. It follows, therefore, that the executive organisation of the Congress must not contain titled persons, Government school-masters, practising lawyers and members of legislative bodies and persons who use foreign cloth or cloth manufactured even in our mills, and those who deal in such cloth. Such persons can become Congressmen, but cannot and should not become members of executive organisations. They can become delegates and influence the Congress the resolutions, but once the Congress policy is fixed, those who do not believe in that policy in my opinion, should stand out of the executive bodies. The All India Congress Committee and all the local executive committees are such bodies, and they should contain only those members who whole-heartedly believe in and are prepared to carry out the policy. I am the author of the introduction into the Congress organisation of the system of single transferable votes. But experience has shown that so far as the executive organisations are concerned it cannot work. The idea that all opinions should be represented on these bodies must be abandoned if the executive committees are to become bodies for the purpose of carrying out the Congress policy for the time being.

One of the most important reasons why we have not been wholly successful is that the members of these executive bodies have not believed even in the Congress creed. I stand where I did when I wrote my impressions of All India Congress Committee, which met at Delhi soon after the Bardoli resolutions were passed by the Working Committee. I saw then as clearly as possible that many members, if not indeed the majority, did not believe in non-violence and truth as an integral part of the Congress creed. They would not allow that 'peaceful' meant 'non-violent' and that 'legitimate' meant 'truthful.' I know that

to-day there is more of the violent and the untruthful spirit in us than we had in February 1922. I would, therefore, urge that those who do not believe in the five boycotts and non-violence and truthfulness should resign from the Congress executive bodies. That is why I have said in my statement on the Councils entry that the constructive programme should be worked by different parties through their respective organisations. The thorough believers, if there are any, in the five boycotts and non-violence and truth, have no organisation other than the Congress. The most natural thing in my opinion, therefore, is for the Swarajists to work the constructive programme through their own organisations. So far as I can see, their method of working must be different from that of the boycotters. If they are to make the Councils entry successful, they must devote the whole of their energy to that purpose, and therefore they can help the constructive programme by working it mainly through the Councils and the Assembly.

I for one can be no party to a tug of war in which each party tries to capture the Congress executive. That war may be fought out if at all necessary without heat and bitterness at the forthcoming sessions in December. The Congress is the debating and legislative body. The Permanent organisations are purely executive bodies to give effect to the resolutions of the Congress. I am in a desperate hurry. I believe implicitly in the full and undiluted non-violent non-co-operation programme as passed by the Congress and no other. If I can get really non-violent and truthful workers who share my belief in the boycotts, in the potency of Khaddar, in Hindu-Muslim unity and in removal of untouchability, I would again feel Swaraj coming to us much quicker than most of us think possible. But if we wrangle on in the All India Congress Committee, we can only discredit and obstruct one another. Each party honourably and without jealousy and ill-will working separately (because they cannot do otherwise) can help one another.

I trust that all the members of the All India

Congress Committee will attend the forthcoming meeting. If we can discuss the plan of action in a calm manner without imputing motives and make the composition of the All India Congress Committee homogeneous, we can do a tremendous amount of work during the forthcoming six months. I would respectfully invite each member to consider for himself or herself where he or she is in respect of the programme. If they do not believe in the programme as it is and in its capacity unaided to secure Swaraj, and if they really voice the feelings of their electors, I would not hesitate to advise the Committee even to take the risk of revising and radically altering the programme in anticipation of endorsement next year. No doubt for such a drastic change there must be a clearly made out case, there must be real public opinion behind it. Granted these two conditions, I have no doubt that in spite of anything to the contrary in the constitution, it is the duty of the All India Congress Committee to reverse the Congress policy at the risk of incurring condemnation and show useful and substantial work at the end of the year. Stagnation must be avoided at all cost.

After I had finished the foregoing, it was pointed out to me that it was possible that my views might tend to make Swarajists appear weaker than or inferior to the No Changers in the estimation of the masses. Nothing can be further from my thought than any such idea. There is no question of quality. It is purely a question of temperamental differences. I have written simply with an eye to effective working of the Congress executives. That working is possible only if the executives are run only by one party. If the Swarajist view is more popular, the executive bodies should be solely in their hands. The Congress must always represent the popular view whatever it may be, whether good or bad. And it is the duty of those who hold contrary views not necessarily weak or inferior, to stand out and work on the popular mind from outside. The No-Changers will be belying their trust, if they regard Pro-Changers as, in any way, inferior to them by reason of their holding different views.

It has been further pointed out to me that in arguing for exclusive control of the executives, I am departing from the spirit, if not the letter, of the Delhi resolution reaffirmed at Cocanada. I have read both the resolutions carefully. In my opinion the Delhi resolution and more specially the Cocanada resolution does not contemplate joint control of the executives. The Cocanada resolution is not a mere reaffirmation, but it emphasises the principle of nonviolent non-co-operation. But even if my reading of the resolutions is incorrect, my argument remains unimpaired. Mine is only an opinion to be accepted or rejected by the members of the A. I. C. C. And it is actuated by the sole consideration of expeditious working. I feel that both the parties can effectively help each other only if they work separately.

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*Mahatma Gandhi writes the following note in 'Young India' of 5th June 1924 :*

*Digging my own grave:*—This is the expression that has been used about my article on Congress organisation. I like it. For nothing will please me more than to dig my own grave than that I should dig that of Truth for which and which alone I want to live. An esteemed English friend who helped me in South Africa once told me, "Do you know that I have thrown myself heart and soul into your movement because you represent a minority. For I believe that truth always lies with minorities. You should not therefore be surprised at my opposing you, friends though we are, if I ever find you representing a majority." I have often wondered and never more so than now, whether the friend was not right and whether he would not have come to the conclusion that I must be in the wrong as I am at present supposed to be representing a majority. But whether the friend was right or wrong, I hope that the A. I. C. C. will not hesitate to put me in a minority and I shall also hope that I shall not be found untrue to my faith. I assure them that I

shall work as zealously under defeat as perhaps I have worked with the tide flowing with me. If we want to serve India we must put measures before men. The latter come and go, but causes must survive even the greatest of them.

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*5th June, 1924*

### ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The forthcoming session of the All India Congress Committee will decide the future work of the Congress for the ensuing six months. Six months for a nation which is in a hurry to get her own is a long time to lose. Every moment is precious. The members of the All India Congress Committee are representatives of representatives. They are or should be the real executive of the nation. They can if they will hasten Swaraj. They must be men and women with an unquenchable faith in the national programme for the time being. They must enforce it in their own lives and induce others to do likewise. Three hundred and fifty representatives *working* with one mind cannot but produce an instantaneous impression upon the country.

Let each one of us ask himself or herself :

1. Do I believe in non-violence and truth for the purpose of gaining Swaraj ?
2. Do I sincerely believe in Hindu-Muslim unity ?
3. Do I believe in the capacity of the *Charkha* to solve the problem of the economic distress of the starving millions of India, and in order to make hand-spun Khaddar universal ; am I prepared to spin religiously for half an hour at least per day, except when actually travelling continuously for twenty-four hours ; And am I prepared to use nothing but hand-spun Khaddar ?
4. Do I believe in the boycott of Government titles, government schools, law-courts and councils ?

5. If a Hindu, do I believe that untouchability is a blot upon Hinduism ?

6. Do I believe in the complete abolition of the drink and drug evil in spite of the fact that the whole of the revenue will be wiped out at a single stroke ?

In my opinion, no one who does not believe in the foregoing articles of the Congress programme should remain in the All India Congress Committee. It is necessary to draw attention to all the articles because I know that many members do not believe in non-violence and truth. I hear too that there are practising lawyers in the Congress executives, that there are members who do not exclusively and always wear Khaddar garments, that there are non-co-operators who are actually on the managing committees of national schools and who send their own children to government schools, and that, lastly, merchants who trade in foreign or mill-made cloth are still on Congress executives. I can only say that it is impossible to carry on the Congress programme to a successful issue if we who have to work it do not carry it out in our own persons. How can a practising lawyer ask or expect his brother to give up his practice, or one who does not himself spin demonstrate the necessity of others' spinning ?

I shall plead before the committee for an honest programme. If the majority have another programme, I would advise the minority to resign and attend to the Congress programme from outside the A. I. C. C. There has been too much disregard of Congress resolutions and demands from the Working Committee. I would therefore also suggest that the members should at the end of every month send yarn of their own spinning, at least ten *tolas* of at least ten counts of even and well-twisted yarn. This quantity can be easily spun in thirty days at the rate of half an hour per day. The yarn should reach the secretary Khadi Board, not later than the 15th of each month. He who fails to send the requisite quantity should be deemed to have resigned. Likewise those who do not send returns of hand-carding, hand-spinning, hand-weaving and



hand-spun yarn from month to month in their own areas, should be deemed to have resigned. The returns should reach the secretary every month, not later than the 15th of every month.

I know that these are hard conditions for those who do not wish to work and easy for those who do. There is no way of working the programme unless the chosen representatives of the people, work.

There has been too much laxity about our method of work. It is the time that we became a little less unbusiness-like. The charge that the programme is uninspiring or that a nation of spinners cannot achieve Swaraj does not frighten me because I know nothing so inspiring as a programme of solid work and, I am convinced that we have to become once again a nation of carders, spinners and weavers if we are ever to banish starvation from the land and become economically independent.

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*12th June, 1924*

### AN APPROPRIATE QUERRY

BY M. K. GANDHI

A Correspondent writes :—

“You have practically called on the Swarajists to resign immediately from Congress executives. The presumption is that they are in a minority in the country and that the majority of Congressmen, if not Indians, are no-changers. While it is true that at Gaya there was a clear verdict by the country, there was quite a deal of doubt regarding the composition of the Delhi and Cocanada sessions. The atmosphere in the country has been decidedly on the side of the no-changers, but was it not due to a feeling of loyalty to your personality when you were at Yerawada? Should we not ascertain indisputably that as a free nation (free from the obsession of sticking to your views simply because

you could not expound your case yourself) we vote for the no-changers or rather against the pro-changers? Whilst such a referendum is inadvisable till the Congress meeting in December, should it not also be accepted that the strengthening of Congress executives in actually carrying out the constructive programme should be done voluntarily by workers serving under what may be called a mixed jury."

I must confess that there is considerable force in the objection raised by the writer. I fear it is highly likely that the no-changers voted for the original programme out of loyalty to me. If that is the case they should now be absolved from the awkward predicament. Happily for me I have anticipated my correspondent by suggesting that if the present members of the All India Congress Committee do not believe in the Congress programme, they should not hesitate to throw me overboard. The cause is everything. Those even who are dearest to us must be shunted for the sake of the cause. Loyalty to it is paramount to every other consideration. All I plead for is common honesty and that in the interest of efficiency. Those who do not believe in the whole programme should give place to those who do. If all or the majority do not believe in it, they should frame a new one, and carry that out. I would not make a fetish even of Congress resolutions. The goal of the Congress is Swaraj. And if last six months' experience has shown us a better method, let us by all means adopt it. We shall be truer to the Congress by acting upto our convictions than by pretending to follow the Congress resolutions in which we never had faith or in which our faith has now suffered a shock. If the six months' experience inclined us to the Swarajist view, we should candidly and courageously confess it and unhesitatingly join the Swarajists. All I am pleading against is camouflage and make-believe. It will ruin our cause. If we cannot run Congress organisations without practising lawyers, let us by all means remove the lawyers' boycott. And if we do not believe in the spinning wheel let us ignore it. No mere lip-loyalty to the wheel will give us the yarn we want for the thirty crores. In

other words let us do what all successful organisations have done hitherto ; i. e. to be entrusted to those who most thoroughly believe in them. Orators cannot run an organisation whose chief business is to teach and popularise spinning nor can spinners run a debating assembly where oratory counts for everything.

Another appropriate objection has been raised by another friend. He says my position would be correct if the A. I. C. C. was a purely executive body. But he says it is also a debating and practically legislative body in that it frames resolutions for the following Congress. How can an executive be elected before it knows the laws it is to carry out ? The objection is, in my opinion thoroughly sound. But here again I am safe ; for I have simply given my opinion as to how the Congress resolutions can and should be carried out, during ensuing six months. No technical difficulty can be allowed to stand in the way of the Congress work. And if my view of Congress executives commends itself to the Congressmen the difficulty suggested by the friend can be easily overcome for the next year by providing for re-election of executives after the Congress sessions. My opinion, in so far as it has any weight, should be treated purely as a guide for members as well as electors. I have been obliged to give it because I shall be held largely responsible for carrying out the programme. In giving my opinion, I have therefore also stated the terms on which my services can be effectively employed.

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*19th June, 1924*

### THE ACID TEST

BY M. K. GANDHI

I propose to move at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee the following four resolutions :—

I. In view of the fact that the members of Congress organisations throughout the country have themselves

hitherto neglected handspinning, in spite of the fact that the spinning wheel and its product handspun Khaddar have been regarded as indispensable for the establishment of Swaraj and although their acceptance has been regarded by the Congress as a necessary preliminary to civil disobedience, the A. I. C. C. resolves that all the members of the various representative Congress organisations shall, except when disabled by sickness or prevented by continuous travelling, regularly spin for at least half an hour every day and shall send to the secretary of the All India Khadi Board at least ten tolas each of even and well-twisted yarn of a count not below ten, so as to reach him not later than the 15th day of each month, the first consignment to reach the secretary not later than the 15th day of August 1924, and thereafter in regular monthly succession. Any member failing to send the prescribed quantity by the prescribed date shall be deemed to have vacated his office and such vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner; provided that the member vacating in the manner aforesaid shall not be eligible for re-election before the next general election for the members of the several organisations.

2. Inasmuch as complaints have been received that provincial secretaries and other members of Congress organisations do not carry out the instructions issued to them from time to time by officers duly authorised thereto, the A. I. C. C. hereby resolves that those in charge of matters referred to them failing to comply with the instructions of officers thereto appointed shall be deemed to have vacated their offices and the vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner, provided that the member thus vacating shall not be eligible for re-election till the next election.

3. In the opinion of the A. I. C. C. it is desirable that the Congress electors elect to various offices in the Congress organisations, only those who in their persons carry out to the full the Congress creed and the various

non-co-operation resolutions of the Congress including the five boycotts, namely, of all mill-spun cloth, Government law courts, schools, titles and legislative bodies; and the A. I. C. C. hereby resolves that the members who do not believe in and do not in their own persons carry out the said boycotts shall vacate their seats and that there should be fresh elections in respect of such seats; provided that if the members vacating so choose they may offer themselves for re-election.

4. The A. I. C. C. regrets the murder of the late Mr. Day by the late Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family; and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided of the country prompting the murder, the A. I. C. C. strongly condemns this and all such political murders and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the Congress creed and its resolution of non-violent non-co-operation; and is of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards Swaraj, and interfere with the preparations for civil disobedience which in the opinion of the A. I. C. C. is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere.

At the present moment I seem to be doing the very thing I claim to wish to avoid viz., dividing the Congressmen and plunging the country into a controversy. I however assure the reader that it will not last long at least so far as I am concerned. Everyone will share my anxiety and eagerness to clear the air of uncertainty. Some discussion is inevitable if we are to know where we are. I am supposed to work wonders, lead the nation to its predestined goal. Fortunately for me I entertain no such hallucinations. But I do claim to be a humble soldier. If the reader will not laugh at me, I do not mind telling him that I can become also an efficient general on usual terms. I must have soldiers who would obey and who have faith in themselves and in their general and who will willingly carry out instructions. My plan of action is always open and very definite.

Certain well defined conditions being fulfilled, it guarantees success. But what is a poor general to do when he finds soldiers who subscribe to his conditions and yet do not carry them out in their own persons and, may be, do not even believe in them? The resolutions are designed to test the qualifications of the soldiers.

But let me put it another way. The soldiers are in the happy position of being electors of their own general. The would-be general must know the conditions of employment. I remain where I stood in 1920. Only my faith has increased with the years that have gone by. If such is also the case with my employers, I am theirs body and soul. I have no faith in any other plan. I am therefore not available on any other terms, not because I am unwilling but because I am unfit. How would it do if in answer to an advertisement for a red-haired young man of thirty-five measuring six feet six inches, a grey-haired old toothless man of fifty-five, broken down in health offered his services?

All the four resolutions then constitute my application for employment as general and lay down my qualifications and limitations. Here there is no imposition of autocracy, no impossible demand. The members if they are true to the country and themselves will not spare me if they find me to be in the wrong. I hold no man to be indispensable for the welfare of the country. Every one of us is debtor to the land of our birth and there-through to humanity. Every debtor must be dismissed the moment he has ceased to pay. No past services however brilliant should be counted in distributing present employments. The country's good may not be sacrificed to one man or one hundred men. Rather should he or they be sacrificed to the welfare of the country. I invite the members of the A. I. C. C. to approach their task with a determined purpose, without bias, without false emotion or sentiment. I adjure them not to take me on trust. Nothing need be right because I say so. They must decide for themselves. They must know their own minds and their capacity. They

should know by this time that I am a difficult companion and a hard task-master. They will now find me harder than before.

I have seen the argument advanced that Khadi cannot bring Swaraj. This is an old argument. If India wants the fineries of Europe, whether made in the mills of Manchester or Bombay, she must cease to think of Swaraj in the terms of the millions of her sons and daughters. If we believe in the message of the *wheel*, we must spin it ourselves and I promise that it will be an inspiring occupation. If we want Swaraj through non-violent means, and therefore through non-violent disobedience, we must produce a non-violent atmosphere. If instead of haranguing crowds we would give spinning demonstrations in their midst, we would have a peaceful atmosphere. If I could help it I would gag every member of the Congress organisations, except myself and perhaps Shaukat Ali, till Swaraj is attained and put him to the spinning wheel or in charge of a spinning centre. If the silent wheel does not inspire faith and courage and hope, let the members say so boldly.

The second and the third resolutions are complementary of the first.

The fourth resolution tests our belief in the non-violent policy. I have read Deshbandhu Das's statement on the Gopinath Saha resolution. It does not affect what I said last week. So long as the Congress retains and believes in its present creed, there is no half-way house to the resolution drafted by me.

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*26th June, 1924*

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ALL-INDIA  
CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Dear friends,

We rightly regard the Congress to be the most representative of the nation whether for better or for worse. In my opinion the Congress has an almost perfect constitution

designed to represent the nation to the fullest possible extent. But being ourselves imperfect, we have worked it very indifferently. Our voters' roll has been reduced practically to nil in many parts of India. But in spite of it all an organisation that has persisted for forty years and weathered many a storm must remain the most powerful in the land. We regard ourselves as its chosen representatives.

The Congress took a resolution in 1920 that was designed to attain Swaraj in one year. At the end of that year we were within an ace of getting it. But because we failed to get it then, we may not now regard it as indefinitely postponed. On the contrary we must retain the same attitude of hopefulness as before. Above all we must be determined to get Swaraj soon, sooner than the chilly atmosphere around us will warrant.

It is in that spirit that I have framed the resolution for submission to you. They have been before the country now for a week. I have read some of the criticism directed against them. I believe I am open to conviction. But the criticism has not altered it. I have no axes to grind, or the only axe I have to grind is that which will enable us to strike at the root of every impediment in our way.

I believe in Khaddar, I believe in the spinning wheel. It has two aspects terrible and benign.

In its terrible aspect it is calculated to bring about the only boycott we need for independent national existence, viz. that of foreign cloth. It alone can kill the demoralising British self-interest. Then and then only when that interest is killed shall we be in a position to talk to British statesmen on equal terms. To-day they are, as we would be in their place, blinded by self-interest.

In its benign aspect it gives a new life and hope to the villager. It can fill millions of hungry mouths. It alone can bring us in touch and in tune with the villagers. It is the very best popular education that is needed for the millions. It is life-giving. I would not therefore hesitate to turn the Congress into an exclusively Khaddar-producing and Khaddar propaganda



organisation till the attainment of Swaraj, just as I would not hesitate, if I believed in the use of arms and giving violent battle to England, to make the Congress an organisation exclusively devoted to training the nation in the use of arms. To be truly national the Congress must devote itself exclusively to that which will bring the nation most quickly within reach of Swaraj.

Because I believe in the potency of Khaddar to give Swaraj, I have given it the foremost place in our programme. You will not hesitate summarily to reject it, if you do not share my belief. But if you believe in Khaddar, you will regard the requirements I have submitted as a mild minimum. I assure you, if I was not afraid of putting an undue strain on you, I would not have hesitated to implore you to give four hours per day to spinning instead of a paltry half hour.

In this connection let me confess my distrust of Swarajists. I understand that the Khaddar among them is on the wane more than among the others. It distressed me to find that several Swarajists had said final good bye to Khaddar and that the material of which their dress was made was foreign. A few have threatened that if I persecute them in the manner I am doing, they would give up Khaddar and the charkha altogether. I am told that many no-changers are not much better. Khaddar with them still remains a ceremonial dress but for household wear they do not hesitate to wear *videshi* or mill-cloth. The wearing of Khaddar to patronise me is worse than useless and the wearing of it on ceremonial occasions only is hypocritical. Do you not agree with me that both patronage and hypocrisy should be banished from our midst? If you believe in the potency of Khaddar, you will take it up not because I advocate it but because it has become part of your life. I note that a certain fashion of dress has been prescribed for the Viceregal social function. Prohibition of Khaddar is but a short step from the last. Yet another stage and there will be prohibition in the Assembly and Councils.

Another vexed question is about the practising lawyers.

It is clear to me that if we cannot run the Congress without them, we must make the frank confession and remove the boycott. I am free to confess that removal of that boycott is a natural corollary to that of the councils. If entry into the legislative bodies can give, as they do some relief, so does practice in the law courts. We are all aware of the signal services that the late Manomohan Ghose rendered to the poor by the voluntary assistance rendered by him to them. The Government institutions could not have existed, if they had nothing attractive about them. Only, this is no new discovery. Ours is a struggle consisting of self-sacrifice pure and simple. We sacrificed the doubtful, temporary and partial good done by these institutions for the lasting good of the whole country. Moreover, if there is such a thing as honour among us, does it not behove us to retain the boycott apart from any other reason, for the sake of those lawyers who have been disbarred in Tamilnad, Andhra, Karnatak, Maharashtra, and elsewhere? We shall be building traditions of honour only if we cherish it even for the least among us. Let the practising lawyers beware. No family considerations can be allowed to override those of honour. Don't make the mistake of supposing that we can gain Swaraj within a short time, even though we may be dead to all sense of honour. Unless the Congress can at the present moment produce proud, defiant, self-respecting, sensitive, selfless and self-sacrificing patriots who would count no cost too great, there is, for this poor country of ours for a long time to come, no Swaraj in which the poorest can participate. You and I may get a larger share in the spoils of exploitation, but I am sure you will refuse to call that Swaraj.

Need I say anything about the schools? If we cannot resist the temptation of sending our children to the Government schools, really, I cannot understand the opposition to the *system*. If the Government schools and law courts and legislatures are good enough to attract us, our opposition is clearly to the *personnel* and not to the *system*. Non-co-operation was

conceived for a much nobler purpose. If the wish is merely that *we* rather than *Englishmen* man the system, I grant that the boycotts are not only useless but harmful. The logical outcome of the Government policy is to Europeanise India and immediately we have become Europeanised, our English masters will gladly hand over the reins of Government to us. We would be welcomed as their willing agents. I can have no interest in that deadly process save to put the whole of my humble weight against it. My Swaraj is to keep in tact the genius of our civilisation. I want to write many new things but they must be all written on the Indian slate. I would gladly borrow from the West when I can return the amount with decent interest.

Viewed in the light I have put before you, the five boycotts are vital for the Congress. They are vital for Swaraj for the masses.

Such a big question cannot be decided merely by a show of hands, it cannot be decided even by argument. It must be decided by each one of us by ringing for the still small voice within. Each one of us must retire to his closet and ask God to give a definite guidance.

This battle for freedom is no play for you and me. It is the most serious thing in our lives. If therefore the programme sketched by me does not commend itself to you, you must summarily reject it, cost what it may.

Your fellow-worker  
in the service  
of the Motherland,  
M. K. Gandhi.

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*3rd July, 1924*

## DEFEATED AND HUMBLLED

BY M. K. GANDHI

Reporters are rarely able to interest me but one of them did succeed the other day in interesting me in him. I therefore gave him towards the end of the interview more than he had expected. He asked me what I would do if the house was evenly divided. I told him in effect that God would send something to prevent such a catastrophe. I had no idea that my innocent and half-humorous remark was prophetic.

The proceedings of the A. I. C. C. reminded me of those at Delhi just before I was imprisoned. The disillusionment of Delhi awaited me at Ahmedabad.

I had a bare majority always for the four resolutions. But it must be regarded by me as a minority. The house was fairly evenly divided. The Gopinath Saha resolution clinched the issue. The speeches, the result and the scenes I witnessed after, was a perfect eye-opener. I undoubtedly regard the voting as a triumph for Mr. Das although he was apparently defeated by eight votes. That he could find 70 supporters out of 148 who voted had a deep significance for me. It lighted the darkness though very dimly as yet.

Up to the point of the declaration of the poll, I was enjoying the whole thing as a huge joke, though I knew all the while that it was as serious as it was huge. I now see that my enjoyment was superficial. It concealed the laceration that was going on within.

After the declaration, the chief actors retired from the scene. And the house abandoned itself to levity. Most important resolutions were passed with the greatest unconcern. There were flashes of humour sandwiched in between these resolutions. Everybody rose on points of order and information. The ordeal was enough to try the patience of any chairman. Maulana Mahomed Ali came through it all unscathed. He kept

his temper fairly. He rightly refused to recognise 'points of information.' I must confess that the suitors for fame most cheerfully obeyed his summary rulings. Let not the reader conclude that there was at any stage of the proceedings the slightest insubordination. I have not known many meetings where there was so little acrimony or personalities in the debate as in this, even though feelings ran high and the differences were sharp and serious. I have known meetings where under similar circumstances the chairmen have found it most difficult to keep order. The president of the A. I. C. C. commanded willing obedience.

All the same, dignity vanished after the Gopinath resolution. It was before this house that I had to put my last resolution. As the proceedings went on I must have become more and more serious. Often I felt like running away from the oppressive scene. I dreaded having to move a resolution in my charge. I would have asked for postponement of the resolution but for the promise I had made the meeting that I would suggest a remedy, or failing that, move a resolution for protecting litigants from the operation of the third resolution which requests resignation from members who do not believe in the principle of the five boycotts including that of law courts and do not carry them out in their own persons. Protection was intended for those who might be *driven* to the courts either as plaintiffs or defendants. The resolution that was adopted by the Working Committee and previously circulated among the members did protect them. It was substituted by the one actually passed by the A. I. C. C. As the reader knows it exempts from its operation those who might be covered by the Cocanada resolution. In drafting that amendment I had not protected litigants. I had wished to do so by a separate resolution. I had announced the fact at the time of introducing the resolution. And it was this promised resolution that opened for me a way out of 'darkness-invisible.' I moved it with the preface that it was in redemption of the mornin romise. I mentioned too Mr.

Gangadhar Rao Deshpande was an instance in point. I do not believe in exemptions and as-far-as-possibles. But I know that some of the strongest non-co-operators have found it difficult to avoid law courts. Unscrupulous debtors have refused payment to non-co-operators because of their knowledge that the latter could not sue them. Similarly I know men who have brought suits against non-co-operators because they would not defend themselves. The curious will be agreeably surprised to discover, if they searched among the rank and file, the numerous cases in which non-co-operators have preferred to suffer losses to defending themselves or suing. Nevertheless it is perfectly true that representatives have not always been able to keep to the prohibition. The practice, therefore, has been to wink at filing suits and more often at defending them. The Committee has from time to time also passed rules legalising the practice to a certain extent. I thought that now when the A. I. C. C. was adopting a rigid attitude regarding the observance of the boycotts, the position of litigants should be clearly defined. Nothing would please me better than for the Congress to have only those representatives on its executive who would carry out all the boycotts to the full. But the exact fulfilment at the present stage of the boycott of law courts on the part of many is almost an impossibility. Voluntary acceptance of poverty is essential for the purpose. It must take some time before we can hope to man the Congress organisations with such men and women, and run them efficiently. Recognising the hard fact I was prepared to incur the odium of having to move the said resolution of exemption. Hardly had I finished reading it, up sprang the brave Harisarvottama Rao to his feet and in a vigorous and cogent speech opposed it. He said it was his painful duty to oppose me. I told him the pain was mine in that I had to move a resolution I could not defend. His must be the pleasure of opposing an indefensible resolution and of keeping the Congress organisation pure at

any cost. I liked this opposition and was looking forward to the voting. But the opposer was followed by Swami Govind-ananda who raised the technical objection that no resolution designed to affect one previously passed could be moved at the same session of the Committee. The chairman properly rejected the objection, if only because the previous day the very first resolution was amended after it was passed by a majority. But the last straw was unwittingly supplied by Dr. Choithram. I have known him to be a responsible man. A long period of unbroken service lies to his credit. He has embraced poverty for the sake of his country. I was not prepared for a constitutional objection from him in a matter in which the Committee had on previous occasions softened the effect of the boycott resolution. But he thoughtlessly asked whether my resolution was not in breach of the Congress resolution on boycotts. Maulana Mahomed Ali asked me whether the objection was not just. I said of course it was. He therefore felt bound to hold my resolution unconstitutional. Then I sank within me. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, wrong about anybody's speech or behaviour. All were brief in their remarks. They were equally courteous. And what is more they were seemingly in the right. And yet it was all hopelessly unreal. The objections were like reading a sermon on the virtue of self-restraint to a hungry man reduced to a skeleton. Each of the actors acted involuntarily, unconsciously. I felt that God was speaking to me through them and seemed to say "Thou fool knowest not thou that thou art impossible? Thy time is up." Gangadhar Rao asked me whether he should not resign. I agreed with him that he should do so at once. And he promptly tendered his resignation. The president read it to the meeting. It was accepted almost unanimously. Gangadhar Rao was the gainer.

Shaukat Ali was sitting right opposite at a distance of perhaps six yards. His presence restrained me from fleeing. I kept asking myself, 'Could right ever come out of wrong?' Was I not co-operating with evil?' Shaukat Ali seemed to say

to me through his big eyes, 'There is nothing wrong, for all will be right.' I was struggling to free myself from the enchantment. I could not.

The President asked, 'Shall I now dissolve the meeting?' I said, 'Certainly.' But Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was evidently watching whatever changes my face was undergoing was all eyes. He quickly came up and said, 'We cannot disperse without the message you have promised.' I replied, Maulana Saheb it is true I wanted to say something about the future plans. But what I have been witnessing for the last hour after the Gopinath resolution, has grieved me. I do not know where I stand now and what I should do.' 'Then' he said 'say even if it is only that.' I complied and in a short speech in Hindustani laid bare my heart and let them see the blood oozing out of it. It takes much to make me weep. I try to suppress tears even when there is occasion for them. But in spite of all my efforts to be brave, I broke down utterly. The audience was visibly affected. I took them through the various stages I had passed and told them that it was Shaukat Ali who stood in the way of my flight. For I regarded him as trustee for Hindu honour as I was proud enough to regard myself as such for Mussalman honour. And then I told them that I was unable to say how I would shape my future course. I would consult him and other workers who were closely associated with me. It was the saddest speech I had ever made. I finished and turned round to look for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He had stolen away from me and was standing at the farthest end opposite to me. I told him I would now like to go. He said 'Not yet for a while. For we must speak too.' And he invited the audience to speak. Those who spoke did so with a sob. The sight of the hoary-headed Sikh friend who was choked as he was speaking touched me deep. Of course Shaukat Ali spoke and others. All begged pardon and assured me of their unwavering support. Mahomed Ali broke down twice. I tried to soothe him.



I had nothing to forgive for none had done any wrong to me. On the contrary they had all been personally kind to me. I was sad because we were weighed in the scales of our own making—the Congress creed—and found wanting; we were such poor representatives of the nation! I seemed to be hopelessly out of place. My grief consisted in the doubt about my own ability to lead those who would not follow.

I saw that I was utterly defeated and humbled. But defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me. My faith in my creed stands immovable. I know that God will guide me. Truth is superior to man's wisdom.

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[The foregoing was written on Monday the 30th June. I wrote it but I was not satisfied nor am I satisfied now with the performance. On reading it I feel I have not done justice to the meeting or myself. Great as the informal meeting was the one that preceded it and that stung me to the quick, was not less great. I do not know that I have made it clear that no speaker had any malice in him. What preyed upon my mind was the fact of unconscious irresponsibility and disregard of the Congress creed or policy of non-violence.

The informal meeting was a heart-searcher. It purified the atmosphere. The whole of Tuesday I passed in discussing with co-workers my position. My innermost wish was and still is to retire from the Congress and confine my activity merely to Hindu-Muslim Unity, Khaddar and Untouchability. They would not listen. I had no right, they said, to retire at a critical period in the history of the nation. My withdrawal would not smooth matters. It would cause depression and remove from Congress meetings an active restraining influence. I must actively work the programme, of which I was the author, so long as the majority favoured it. The programme had a far greater majority than the voting at the A. I. C. C. would indicate. I must travel in the country and see things for myself. My second proposal was for all who fully accepted the Congress creed to retire in favour of the Swarajists. As

the argument against it developed I rejected it myself as thoughtless. It was the last thing the Swarajists wanted. I felt that it would be doing violence to them to expect them to do the impossible. I know that they would not entertain even the first proposal. I offered it to them at Juhu and renewed it in Ahmedabad. I have therefore reluctantly decided to drink the bitter cup and continue to be in the Congress organisation and shoulder the responsibility for working it until the Congress puts me in an actual numerical minority.

I may not choose short cuts. I must plod. I must pocket my pride and wait till I am driven out.

I must seemingly become a party-man and show that I can still work as a no-party man. I must strive for a majority at the next Congress and endeavour, so far as it is possible to act impartially. It is not beyond the capacity of a Satyagrahi.

The conditions are incredibly simple. The striving to be in a majority consists in solid work.

1. Over and above the spinning for half an hour every spare minute should be given to it.

2. Extra spinning can be dispensed with in order to do Khaddar propaganda.

3. We may swell the electoral roll by getting as many Congress members as possible.

4. There should be no manipulation of papers.

5. There should be no manoeuvring for securing votes.

6. There should be no criticism of the opposite party, as distinguished from policy.

7. There should be no undue pressure exercised on the voters.

Both the parties are said to have resorted in the past to unscrupulous practices in the matter of election of delegates and members of the subordinate organisations. The best way of avoiding corruption is to be indifferent to the result after having adopted all honest measures for influencing voters.

The no-change programme must be what it means. The

proceedings of the Committee have but confirmed the view that the two methods cannot be worked in the same organisation. The Swarajist method cultivates British opinion and looks to the British Parliament for Swaraj. The no-change method looks to the people for it. The two methods represent two opposite mentalities. This is not to say that one is wrong if the other is right. Each may be right in its own place. But for one organisation to work both is to weaken both and therefore to damage the national cause. Whilst one school claims to give political education through the Councils, the other claims to give it exclusively by working among the people and evoking its organising and administrative capacity. One teaches to look up to a government for popular progress, the other tries to show that even the most ideal government plays among a self-governing people the least important part in national growth. One teaches the people that the constructive programme alone cannot achieve Swaraj, the other teaches the people that it and it alone can achieve it.

Unfortunately I was unable to convince the Swarajists of this obvious truth. And I saw constitutional difficulty in the way of securing a homogeneous organisation. We must now therefore do the next best thing. We must silently work up the constructive programme without regard to what will happen in December, in the full belief that whether the Congress rejects or accepts the programme, for us there is no other. I would ask those newspapers that call themselves no-change papers not to criticise the Swarajists in any shape or form. I am convinced that newspapers play a very small part in shaping the policy or programme of the masses. They do not know newspapers. The no-changers have to reach and represent those who have had no political education whatsoever. M.K.G.]

*3rd July, 1924*

## THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

BY M. K. GANDHI

All the resolutions of the All India Congress Committee will be found printed elsewhere.\* The first resolution is bereft of the penalty clause. It was my first defeat in a series. Majorities cannot deceive me. It was impossible for me to be satisfied with a bare majority when I knew that if the Swarajist withdrawals were to be taken into account the defeat was a certainty. I therefore urged the meeting to take into account the withdrawals and remove the penalty clause from the resolution.

The second resolution is not the same as the original draft, but in substance it is the same. The principle of disciplinary action is retained.

The third resolution constitutes real failure. I still feel that the elective organisations of the Congress are executive and that therefore they should contain only those who heartily support the Congress Programme for the time being and who are prepared not to obstruct or tone it down, but to carry it out in its entirety. But it was not possible to get over the constitutional difficulty. Any restriction upon the Cocanada programme must be considered a breach of the Congress constitution. Putting the interpretation that I do even now, the original resolution was not a breach. But it was pointed out to me that I have no right to put my own interpretation upon it and that the Swarajists had the right to contend that those who entered the Councils were not debarred from being on the executives. They said that as a matter of fact there were Swarajists on the working Committee already. The argument had great weight with me, and in view of the knowledge that the original resolution disqualifying the Swarajists from being on the executives could only be passed by a narrow majority, was decisive in reconciling me to the resolution as finally adopted. It does not please me. But it was the only possible course left save that

\* See page 350.

of dropping the whole proposition. That was required for the sake of keeping before the country the idea of having a homogeneous organisation and of insisting on purity of political conduct. Representatives must be expected to conform to the standards they lay down for others. It must be pointed out in a variety of ways that the Congress is no longer a begging association but that it is primarily a self-purification association designed to achieve its goal by developing internal strength. Public opinion must therefore be created in favour of the things needed for the national life. The best way of creating it is to frame propositions and enlisting support therefor. Whilst therefore I have reconciled myself to the possibility of temporary heterogeneity I would strongly plead with both the parties not to obstruct each other's path.

The fourth resolution however completed my defeat. It is true that the Gopinath resolution was carried by a bare majority. A clear minority would have pleased me more than a narrow majority. I do not forget the fact that many who voted for Mr. Das's amendment did so because of the rumour of impending arrests. Many naturally felt it a point of honour to protect a valued chief and comrade who had rendered signal services to the country and who had performed great self-sacrifice. Sentiment often outweighs moral considerations and I have no doubt that the Bengal Government will make a serious blunder if they arrest Mr. Das and his supporters. It is too late in the day to punish opinions. If there was no moral consideration against supporting Mr. Das's amendment, I would have had no hesitation whatsoever in myself tendering my support. But I could not, no Congressman could. Mr. Das sees no difference between my resolution and his. I can only call it self-deception. Those who spoke in support of his proposition did not mince matters. They had room for political murder in their philosophy and after all is it not the common philosophy? The majority of the so-called civilised people believe in and act upon it on due occasions. They hold that for a disorganised

and oppressed people political assassination is the only remedy. That it is a false philosophy, that it has failed to make the world better to live in, is only too true. I merely state that if Mr. Das and his supporters have erred, they have the bulk of 'civilised' opinion on their side. The foreign masters of India have no better record to show. If the Congress was a political organisation with no limitation as to means it would be impossible to object to Mr. Das's amendment on merits. It would then be reduced to a question of expedience.

But that there were seventy Congress representatives to support the resolution was a staggering revelation. They have proved untrue to their creed. In my opinion the amendment was in breach of the Congress creed or policy of non-violence. But I purposely refrained from raising such an objection. If the members wanted the resolution it was well for them to have it. It is always best in my opinion to let constitutional questions be decided as a rule by members.

The other resolutions do not require any discussion.

The resolution extolling the Sikh sacrifice and bravery was in continuation of the traditional policy of the Congress.

The opium resolution became necessary for two reasons. Miss La Motte, who has been doing most valuable work in trying to reduce the world's growth of opium to its bare medical necessity, has pointed out in tragic terms the immoral opium policy of the Government of India. Mr. Andrews has shown how the Government of India made itself responsible for changing at the Opium Convention the word "medical" to "legitimate" in describing people's requirements. It therefore became necessary in view of the approaching convention at Geneva for the A. I. C. C. to say what the nation thinks of the Government of India policy. It had become equally necessary to investigate the condition of the Assamese under the opium habit. A fine body of men and women are undergoing a process of decay under the cursed opium habit. The Assam Provincial Congress Committee is ready to inquire into the matter. The A. I. C. C. has therefore thought it desirable to appoint Mr.

Andrews to conduct the inquiry in co-operation with the Provincial Committee.

The seventh resolution authorises the Working Committee to appoint if necessary a deputation to inquire into the condition of Indian labourers of the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon. We know nothing of the condition of the labourers who emigrate to Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula except from the stray reports that appear in the press. It is our duty to study their condition and do whatever we can to ameliorate it.

### RESOLUTIONS

#### *I Handspinning*

1. In view of the fact that the members of Congress organisations throughout the country have themselves hitherto neglected handspinning, in spite of the fact that the spinning wheel and its product handspun Khaddar have been regarded as indispensable for the establishment of Swaraj and although their acceptance has been regarded by the Congress as a necessary preliminary to civil disobedience, the A. I. C. C. resolves that members of all elected Congress organisations shall, except when disabled by sickness, or prevented by continuous travelling or other similar cause regularly spin for at least half an hour every day and shall each send to the Secretary of All India Khadi Board or to any person appointed by him in this behalf at least 2,000 yards of even and well-twisted yarn of their own spinning so as to reach him not later than the 15th day of August 1924, and thereafter in regular monthly succession. Any member failing to send the prescribed quantity by the prescribed date shall, unless unavoidably prevented, be deemed to have vacated his office and such vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner; provided that the member vacating in the manner aforesaid shall not be eligible for re-election before the next general election for the members of the several organisations.

2. In view of the fact that certain members whilst the proceedings of the committee were going on, deemed it necessary to withdraw from the committee, by reason of their resentment

of the penalty clause in the obligatory spinning resolution, and in view of the fact that the penalty clause of the resolution was carried only by 67 against 37 votes and further in view of the fact that the said penalty clause would have been defeated if the votes of the withdrawals had been given against, this committee considers it proper and advisable to remove the penalty clause from the resolution and to reaffirm the said resolution without the said penalty clause.

## *II Defaulters*

Inasmuch as it has been brought to the notice of the committee that instructions issued from time to time by offices and organisations duly authorised thereto have sometimes not been carried out properly, it is resolved that such disciplinary action, including dismissal, as may be deemed advisable by respective executive committee of the P. C. C.'s of the provinces in which the failure has occurred shall be taken against the persons about whom complaint may be made and in the cases of complaints by or on behalf of the central organisation such disciplinary action as may be taken by the Provincial Executive Committee shall be reported to the complaining organisations. In the case of default by the whole organisations the disciplinary action shall be taken by the superior organisation.

## *III Request to Representatives*

The A. I. C. C. draws the attention of the Congress voters to the fact that the five boycotts viz. of all foreign cloth, Government law-courts, educational institutions, titles and legislative bodies except in so far as the boycott of legislative bodies may be affected by the Cocanada resolution and the propaganda for the exclusive use of Khaddar are still part of the Congress programme, and therefore considers it desirable that those Congress voters who believe in the Congress programme do not elect to the various organisations subordinate to the Congress those who do not believe in the principle of and carry out in their own persons the said five



boycotts except where affected by the said Cocanada resolution, and do not exclusively use hand-spun Khaddar and the A. I. C. C. therefore requests such persons who are now members of Congress elective organisations to resign their places.

#### *IV Condemnation of Murders*

The A. I. C. C. regrets the murder of Ernest Day by Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family; and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder, the A. I. C. C. strongly condemns this and all political murders, and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the non-violent policy of the Congress; and is of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards Swaraj, and interfere with the preparations for civil disobedience which in the opinion of the A. I. C. C. is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere.

#### *V Appreciation of Sikhs*

The A. I. C. C. places on record its appreciation of the amazing self-sacrifice undergone by the Sikhs in the prosecution of the defence of their religious rights and congratulates them specially on the bravery and cool courage exhibited by them at the time of the unnecessary, uncalled for and cruel firing at Jaito.

#### *VI Opium Policy*

In the opinion of the A. I. C. C the opium policy of the Government of India is altogether contrary to the moral welfare of the people of India and other countries. The A. I. C. C. is further of opinion that the people of India would welcome the total abolition of the opium traffic for purposes of revenue and is also of opinion that the production of opium is out of all proportion to the medical requirements of India.

The A. I. C. C. hereby appoints Mr. C. F. Andrews to conduct an enquiry in connection with the Assam Provincial Congress Committee into the opium habits of the people of Assam and the effect upon them of the opium policy of the Government and for this purpose authorises the Working Committee to make the necessary arrangements.

### *VII Indians Over-seas*

After reading the report of Messrs Andrews and Chaturvedi on emigration from India for labour purposes, the A. I. C. C. hereby authorises the Working Committee to send if necessary the deputation suggested in the report to the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon and invite the co-operation of other organisations of the deputation.

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*3rd July, 1924*

### QUICK RESPONSE

BY M. K. GANDHI

Immediately on the resolution requesting members who did not carry out the boycotts in their own persons to resign, being carried at the A. I. C. C. meeting, Mr. Kalidas Jhaveri who is a practising lawyer handed in his resignation as member of various committees. He was elected with the full knowledge of the voters that he had resumed practice. I congratulate Mr. Kalidas Jhaveri on the quick response to the committee's invitation. He is a good worker. Let us hope that his services will not be lost to the Congress because he has resigned office. Every one who either may not see eye to eye with the Congress in all its programme, or because of weakness or circumstances over which he may have no control and therefore cannot have a place in the executive organisation, can still work as effectively as if he was in the executive. There is for instance nothing to prevent Mr. Jhaveri from enlisting members, spinning, carrying

on Khaddar propaganda, collecting subscriptions etc. Indeed a sincere worker prefers work to responsibility of office and by not being on the executive escapes the terrible wranglings that take place therein.

When the A. I. C. C. rejected the resolution exempting litigants, Mr. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande immediately tendered his resignation which was accepted as soon as tendered. Mr. Deshpande happened to be the General Secretary of the Congress. He is also the chairman of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee. It will be interesting to learn how the difficulty in Karnatak is to be overcome, seeing that Mr. Deshpande is the moving spirit. He is organising the Congress work.

Mr. Gangadhar Rao's case is a very big experiment. If he is able to guide the people under his influence without occupying any office, he will have set an example for all of us to copy. It is necessary for us to bring into being workers who would want no office and yet would render as effective service as the strongest official. Such men and women are the pride of a nation. They are its reserve force.

There is yet another reflection that arises from the interesting situation. Why should all of us possess property? Why should not we after a certain time dispossess ourselves of all property? Unscrupulous merchants do this for dishonest purposes. Why may we not do it for a moral and a great purpose. For a Hindu it was the usual thing at a certain stage. Every good Hindu is expected after having lived the household life for a certain period to enter upon a life of non-possession of property. Why may we not revive the noble tradition? In effect it merely amounts to this that for maintenance we place ourselves at the mercy of those to whom we transfer our property. To me the idea is attractive. In the innumerable cases of such honourable trust there is hardly one case in a million of abuse of trust. Of course, there are moral considerations arising out of such transactions. Take the instance of father and son. If the son is as good a non-

co-operator as the father why should the father tempt his son by burdening him with ownership of property? Such considerations will always arise and the moral worth of a person is tested by his ability in delicately balancing cross problems of ethics. How such a practice can be worked without giving a handle to dishonest persons can only be determined after long experimenting. No one however need be deterred from trying the experiment for fear of the example being abused. The divine author of the 'Gita' was not deterred from delivering the message of the 'Song Celestial' although he probably knew that it would be tortured to justify every variety of vice including murder.

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*The following notes by M. K. Gandhi appeared in 'Young India' of 10th July, 1924.*

## COUNCILS ENTRY

BY M. K. GANDHI

After the closing of the session of the A. I. C. C. Pandit Motilalji went to Rajkot for a domestic visit and halted at Ahmedabad on his way to Bombay. We met during the halt. In the course of our discussion I happened to say that it would be disastrous if the Swarajists retired from the councils at this stage. He immediately reminded me of my previous writing that if I could convince the Swarajists I would ask them to withdraw. I said I saw no contradiction between the two. The one statement is permanent and based upon principle, the other is applicable to the immediate present only and is based on expedience. There is no doubt that the Swarajists have created a stir in the Government circles. There is no doubt too that any withdrawal at the present moment will be misunderstood as a rout and weakness. As a matter of fact, so far as the A. I. C. C. is concerned, the Swarajist position has been never so strong as it is now. They are entitled to claim a moral victory. Believing as they do in giving battle to the Government in the Assembly

and the councils, they have no reason whatsoever for withdrawing from the legislative bodies at the present moment. Their withdrawal at this juncture can only add to the present depression in the country and strengthen the hands of a government which wants to give nothing to justice and which yields gracelessly and reluctantly to pressure.

The only opportune time for the Swarajists to come out will be when we the whole-hoggers have become active workers of our own programme, which we consider to be the only one that can bring us Swaraj, and shown progressive success, or when the Swarajists are by bitter experience convinced that the councils can only give condiments but no bread, and that therefore they should give their whole time and attention to the constructive programme.

The key to the situation lies in the hands of us 'whole-hoggers.' We claim that the masses are behind us. I at least feel so. If they are, we must show it by results—not by merely securing a majority at the Congress but by showing substantial work. All the No-changers in all the provinces cannot show adequate results. The fault is probably not theirs. We like the programme, but we have not evolved the capacity for working it. But if that be the true diagnosis, we must now work, for work not words will give us the capacity. Then and not till then, when we have shown substantial results, will the Swarajists of their own accord come away from the councils.

There is, in my opinion, no room for a centre party. A centre party is a party of vacillation. It floats with the tide, whereas the time has come for us all to decide one way or the other. Those who believe in the councils must remain in or being out enter them or organise work for them. It will be disastrous for them and for the country if, in spite of their belief in the councils, they retired from them for fear of public opinion. No one who wants Swaraj can dare idle away his or her time.

## MY POSITION

I would like to retain my hold on the Congress not by a fictitious or manufactured majority—not merely because my withdrawal is likely to create disorganisation and depression. Even that must be faced if I cannot make my programme acceptable. Enervation is bound to be followed by rejuvenation. The Congress had become a reality in 1920—21. There is fear of its becoming an unreality worse than before 1920. In 1920 there was no organised dishonesty. Then there was no limitation of delegates, no obligation upon Congressmen to do any continuous work and no purse. Now we have limitation to the number of delegates, resolutions are almost all addressed to them and we have even now a purse such as the Congress never possessed at any time before 1920.

The natural result must therefore be dishonesty if we are not incessantly watchful. Swarajists tell me that the No-changers have dishonestly worked the constitution and the latter pay the same compliment to the former. I do not know the truth. But I do know that it bodes ill for Swaraj, if we cannot or do not work the Congress constitution with the utmost honesty.

I would like the Congress to become progressively popular. I would therefore man it with mercantile, artisan and agricultural classes. I would therefore also keep all the boycotts intact and have on the executive only those who fully carry them out in their own persons. Those who cannot but still believe in them can help those who do carry them out but who are inexperienced in the management of institutions or who are not known to the public as workers. It should be the privilege of educated classes to be behind and push into public life those who have hitherto kept aloof.

In an organisation thus conceived, privileged classes have no place on the executive. They can all be in the annual deliberative assembly. Pandit Motilalji suggests a small standing deliberative assembly. I should not mind it. It would

perhaps be an advantage to have such a body with all the powers of the Congress. There is no doubt that the constitution requires some drastic changes. We must secure efficiency and swiftness. And these cannot be secured even under a perfect constitution, if we who have to work it are not honest or do not want efficiency and swiftness.

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*10th July, 1924*

### RULES TO BE OBSERVED

The All India Khadi Board has passed the following resolutions.

“1. Every member of the A. I. C. C, every member of the general body of the Provincial Congress Committees and of District, Sub-divisional and Taluka committees, and every member of the executive committee of primary Sabhas are bound by the A. I. C. C. resolution about spinning to send to the All India Khadi Secretary at least 2000 yards of yarn on the 15th of every month beginning from 15th August next.

2. Provincial Khadi Board Secretaries are requested with the assistance of the Secretaries of the Provincial Congress committees to prepare registers of all members bound by the resolution serially numbered and take steps to inform them of the duties imposed therein.

3. The register should be made in folio size with 3 names to a page and leaving enough blank space under each name for making entries month after month. If the register cannot be made up in one volume, more books than one may be used. There should be sufficient number of blank pages at the end for entering names of new members elected to vacancies. An alphabetical index should be appended.

4. Each Provincial Khadi Secretary will collect the yarn received and despatch them in one consignment every month to the All India Khadi Board. Every member's yarn however

should be in a distinct packet labelled and described outside though the packets are sent in one parcel to the All India Khadi Board's office.

5. Where there are no Provincial Khadi Secretaries, the Provincial Congress Secretary is requested to do the needful as above.

6. Members are requested to note that all yarn should be:—(a) of the member's own spinning, (b) even and well twisted, (c) properly hanked in one uniform size; the hanks should be as far as possible of standard size, four feet long each winding. (d) with ends properly tied, (e) with the name of the member and his serial number and the length of the yarn and date shown by a label attached to the yarn.

7. Provincial Khadi Secretaries will enter in their registers the date of receipt of yarn every month and note defaults.

8. All defaulters' names should be reported in the last week of every month. "

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*17th July, 1924*

## BARA BAZAR CONGRESSMEN

BY M. K. GANDHI

When I read the account of disturbances ending in assault between Congressmen in Bara Bazar, Calcutta, I was disinclined to believe it. But three letters received by me from Congressmen who were most of them eye-witnesses show that there was a free fight at the meeting and all this for the sake not of attaining the object of the Congress but for the sake of capturing the committee. All the three letters are from professed no-changers. The letters do not enable one to fix the guilt on any one party. I have no doubt that a Swarajist account would entirely blame the no-changers. What puzzles me is that any party should resort to violence for the sake of capturing an organisation which is claimed to be nonviolent. The writers of the letters say that they are 'my followers.' If by calling themselves 'my followers



they claim to be votaries of non-violence, they must avoid every occasion for conflict. They must therefore cease to take part in an armed fight for capturing the Congress or any of its committees. My correspondents tell me that although no-changers are in a decided majority in Bara Bazar, the Swarajists are likely to pack their meetings or break up no-changers' meetings and thus control the Congress organisation. Supposing that all these charges are true, surely the no-changers have a non-violent remedy open to them. They must simply cease to attend Swarajist meetings and form their own organisation for working their programme, if it is the programme they want to work and not the Congress they want to capture. I promise that the no-changers will, if they work, make themselves indispensable to the Swarajists. There is but one God, one goal, one means. There is unity in disease, therefore there is unity in remedy. Whether it is the Government or the Swarajists, there is only one sovereign remedy, namely non-violent non-co-operation. 'My followers' will therefore do well to set up their own organisation of work and no talk. They must cut their way to the nations heart through service. I have addressed my argument to the no-changers because they are the protesting party and they write as 'my followers' I neither believe nor disbelieve their charges against Swarajist. I claim the latter too to be 'my followers' since they claim equally with no-changers to be the votaries of the Congress creed. If they assert, as I have no doubt they will assert that they were not in the wrong, I would suggest to them the same remedy as I have to the 'no-change followers' of mine. 'My followers' wait for no response from the opposite party for they do not retaliate. Those that do not, expect no return. They are therefore never hurt. To put in the most concrete manner possible, no one who wants to spin, or do what lies in him to promote Hindu-Muslim unity, or, if a Hindu, to remove untouchability, requires any organisation. Organisations may want him and he will gladly give his service wherever he is wanted. A Swarajist friend tells me that in Maharashtra no-changers have and

retain their majority purely through brute-force and that in Berar it was they who resorted to blows. If that be so, I would ask the no-changers to apologise and wherever they are holding office through brute force or unclean methods to vacate office and yet do their task. It is a gross superstition to believe that one cannot serve effectively without the Congress prestige at one's back.

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*17th July, 1924*

‘AN APPEAL TO THE NATION’

BY M. K. GANDHI

Under the above heading Mr. Srish Chandra Chatterji and eighteen other signatories have issued a document which I copy below :

We are passing through a series of national crises the gravity of which can hardly be exaggerated. There are moments in the history of nations when a decisive move in the right direction often leads a nation to a triumphant goal and when that supreme moment is lost in vague imaginations or false and indecisive steps, it takes long centuries to retrieve the loss. India is passing through some such crisis and we are extremely fortunate that the crisis is not yet over. The whole world is shivering from the pains of Labour, the indications of a new life are manifest everywhere, and a regenerated India must find a place among the new-born nations of the world. This rejuvenated India cannot accept any over-lord, she must be a free and independent nation.

At a time when all the nations of the world are fighting for independence and liberty, at a time when our Indian heroes are championing the cause of India's independence abroad, it is simply ridiculous and shameful that we Indians should hesitate to accept independence as our only legitimate and logical goal; we therefore appeal to our nation to declare in the open Congress in unmistakable terms that indepen-

dence and complete independence is our destined goal; let there be no ambiguous phrases to qualify it, let it be preached in all its nakedness. It is the moral force of this ideal that creates nations.

We must educate the country from this very moment in a way so that the people may realise the significance of a republic and a federation. We may postpone it for the future only at the risk of a great national calamity. We therefore appeal to the Congress delegates to define Swaraj as a Federated Republic of the United States of India.

We also appeal to the delegates of this Congress to delete the words "by peaceful and legitimate means" from the Congress creed, so that men holding every shade of opinion may have no difficulty in joining the only national organisation in the country, though for the present it may be retained as a part of the actual programme of Congress work. Our time is short and we cannot dilate upon this point at any length, but we only say that means are after all means and our object and means should not be confounded with each other.

We are further of opinion that mere changing of the creed and passing of resolutions would not bring us independence. We therefore request the representatives of our nation to engage the whole strength and the whole resources of the Congress in organising a band of national workers who will devote all their time and all their energy in the service of their motherland and who must be ready to suffer and even be ready to sacrifice their lives for the national cause. When the Congress is backed by an organisation of this kind then and then alone will the Congress have any strength and only then can we expect the voice of the Congress to be respected.

The other items in our programme should be:—

(1) Boycott of British goods.

(2) Establishment or helping in the establishment of factories and cottage industries on a strictly co-operative basis.

(3) Helping the labourers and peasants of our land in obtaining their grievances redressed and organising them for their own economic good and moral prosperity.

(4) And finally to organise a federation of all the Asiatic races in the immediate future.

I know that this 'appeal to the nation' has been before the public for some time. It contains nothing new. Nevertheless, it represents the views not merely of the signatories but of a large number of educated Indians. It will not therefore be a waste of energy to examine the contents.

Whereas the Congress leaves Swaraj undefined, the signatories would have complete independence and therefore define Swaraj as a Federated Republic of the United States of India. There is nothing in the Congress creed to prevent India aspiring after independence. In fact, Swaraj that does not enable India to declare her independence if necessary is no Swaraj. What however the independence of the signatories means is severance at any cost and in every case with England. I hold that such severance is not indispensable for India's growth and freedom. The burden of severance should lie with the English people. It is more dignified for us to declare our readiness to be partners on equal terms and at will with the English in a Federation of Free States. Acceptance of such a position on the part of Englishmen may be impossible but we have no right to assume the impossibility of a thing which in its nature is not impossible. Isolated independence is not the goal of the world-states. It is voluntary inter-dependence. England is by no means so independent as to absorb any European State she chooses. Her independence depends partly upon the good-will of her neighbours and partly upon her armament. In so far as she relies upon her armament, she is a menace to the world, as in fact she became during the late war. She stood, as we now learn, not for righteousness but for plunder. Her statesmen

equally with France and other States were guilty of secret treaties, diplomatic fraud and barbarities hardly inferior to Germany's. It must be clear to every one that it cannot be such armed independence that the signatories want, and if they do I am certain that they represent only themselves. Independence is a word hallowed by centuries of usage and therefore it is possible to raise round it a large body of opinion but no one would hazard a definition of it that would suit the whole of that body. I suggest therefore that there is no substitute for Swaraj, and the only universal definition to give it is 'that status of India which her people desire at a given moment.'

If I were asked what India desires at the present moment, I should say I do not know. I could only say I would have her to desire truthful relations between Hindus and Mussalmans, bread for the masses and removal of untouchability. That is how I would define Swaraj at the present moment. I give that definition because I claim to be a practical man. I know that we want political independence of England. It will not be attained without the three things mentioned by me not even if we had arms and we knew how to use them.

The second thing the signatories desire is the removal of the clause restricting the means to what is 'peaceful and legitimate'. I share the signatories' opinion, not for the reasons they give but for the very reverse of them. They say 'means are after all means.' I would say 'means are after all everything.' As the means so the end. Violent means will give violent Swaraj. That would be a menace to the world and to India herself. France obtained her freedom by violent means. She is still paying dearly for her violence. She will presently be at the mercy of her savage African army. I am a staunch believer in absolute equality between man and man but my belief does not take me to the length that the French have gone. Their training of levies of Africans is not proof of her acceptance of the doctrine of equality but of her greed for absolute power. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed

the creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realisation of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. Holding such a belief, I have been endeavouring to keep the country to means that are purely 'peaceful and legitimate.'

But experience has taught me that the purpose has not perhaps been served by the restriction of the means. For I see that those who do not believe in the necessity of non-violence and truth for the attainment of Swaraj have also joined the Congress, for they regard it to be quite the proper thing to sign the Congress creed although they do not themselves believe in it. Perhaps they do not interpret 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' as respectively to mean 'non-violent and truthful.' I would myself therefore probably propose the deletion of the clause 'by peaceful and legitimate means.' It would be a faithful representation of the present state of things. We would then not be open to the charge of camouflage. Every one will be free to follow the policy he likes best.

The last paragraph of the 'appeal' reads extremely well but it shows the utter inexperience of the signatories about practical work. It does not appear to have occurred to them that if we have not yet got a 'band of national workers who will devote all their time and energy', it is not because the Congress has not tried, but because the Congress has failed to get a large number of such workers. Surely it is open to the signatories themselves to raise such a band if it exists. They will find funds enough for the proper stamp of workers. If the signatories will examine the different institutions of India, they will find that not one languishes for want of funds. Is it not clear that a nation always pays for organisations it needs? Only last week I drew attention to the fact that the Khadi Board cannot get the workers it wants.

The other items of the programme suggested by the signatories do not call for any lengthy notice.

I hope I have shown in a previous article \* that boycott of British goods is a totally impracticable proposition.

The proposal for the establishment of factories has a strong western flavour about it and ignores Indian conditions.

The one cottage industry that is possible finds no mention in the programme.

The proposal to help the labourers and peasants is a counsel of perfection.

And the final proposal to organise a federation of all the Asiatic races in the immediate future demonstrates the present impossibility of the programme.

I therefore respectfully suggest to the nineteen signatories to divide all the items suggested by them among themselves, each batch to specialise in connection with the item taken up by it and when success is shown in any one of the departments to come to the Congress for national adoption. But if they have made the proposals without any idea of carrying them out themselves, I ask them to accept the opinion I have tendered and apply themselves to the working of Khaddar—a programme that can harness the energy of all who will work.

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*17th July, 1924*

### WHO SHALL BE PRESIDENT?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Ever since my name has been put forward as one of the candidates for the presidential honour at the forthcoming Congress at Belgaum I have been torn between two opinions. My first thought was immediately to discountenance the idea of my nomination. But I did allow myself also to think that in the face of the stormy weather that the national barque is experiencing, probably I was the best person to direct it safely to its haven. But I now see quite clearly that my second thought was wrong. As I picture for myself the whole of the forth-

\* See page 236.

coming proceedings I quail. The thought of officially conducting the executive for the ensuing year baffles me. Being uncertain as to the direction in which the country is going, I feel I am unfit to be at the helm. I have no other programme but that of the charkha, Hindu-Muslim unity and untouchability. I should be utterly unfit to carry out any other programme, that for instance of boycott of British goods or energising the masses on the proceedings in the councils. These are but samples of many possibilities. And if I cannot help I must not hinder from within. It is contrary to my nature to be responsible for a programme in which I cannot or do not believe. Moreover, I must hold myself free for emergencies. If the Congress representatives do not carry out the simple duty of spinning for half an hour daily and taking the trouble of sending 2000 yards of good yarn of their own spinning from month to month, I should not know where my usefulness to the Congress could be. My presidential address must be a thesis on hand-spinning, complete surrender by Hindus of their material ambition to the Mussalmans and other minorities, and on further asking Hindus to regard untouchability as a sin. If these things cannot enthuse the nation I should be a useless President. How would it do for the Congress to have as President a man who sketched a programme of putting the whole nation in pantaloons? We would at once vote against him however sincere he might be in his professions and however able in the execution of his design. We would not have him because he would not suit us. So may the case be with me.

I must not therefore allow myself to be elected. I appreciate the affection of those who have put forth my name. But I ask them to appreciate my position, sympathise with me and withdraw my name.

There are two possible names, Sarojini Naidu and Dr. Ansari. When I mentioned Dr. Ansari's name, a friend said he would be the fourth Mussalman President within four years. That for me is no bar. Let the Hindus demonstrate their intense desire for Hindu-Muslim unity by having a Mussalman as



President. Dr. Ansari is one of the few impartial leaders we have in both the communities. From the Hindu-Muslim standpoint alone therefore Dr. Ansari may be the best selection.

But I must confess that at the present juncture I would give my vote to Sarojini. She stands for solid Hindu-Muslim unity. Mussalmans do not distrust her. We have not yet had an Indian woman as our President. This is the fittest opportunity for paying our Indian sisters the compliment that is long overdue. Her services in East and South Africa are still fresh in our memory. We cannot reward them better than by selecting her as our President for the coming session. It will strengthen the cause of our countrymen overseas. They will realise in a special manner that we are not unmindful of their interests. Her election will be a graceful acknowledgement of the courtesy and sympathy extended to our fair ambassador by hundreds of Europeans in both the sub-continent and to the opponents among them. It would be an indication of our determination to make our own the cause of our country-men abroad. Lastly, we want an impartial President this year. I am frankly a partisan in the sense that I am an out and out advocate of the old programme. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has, fortunately for her and the nation, no such unalterable view and what is more, no one will identify her with any programme as I rightly must be with the programme I may advocate. I therefore, respectfully ask the Provincial Committees to withdraw my name and elect Sarojini Devi as President, unless for the reason mentioned they would rather have a Mussalman to preside and, would therefore elect Dr. Ansari.

*31st July, 1924*

## THE LOKAMANYA ANNIVERSARY

BY M. K. GANDHI

This fourth anniversary of the withdrawal of the physical presence of the Lokamanya from our midst has a special significance for me and the movement I represent. Both friends and critics inform me that a section of the Maharashtra press is delivering a series of attacks on the movement and me which I should read and answer. I have resisted the temptation to do so. But from what they write and the extracts they send, I know enough to understand their meaning.

I am anxious to pay my quota of tribute to the memory of the deceased on this occasion of the fourth anniversary. But in the midst of distrust of me by some of the best of the followers of the Lokamanya, how shall I pay my quota?

The task is difficult. Just as on that memorable night in 1920 I returned from Sardar Griha after having had a last look at the remains as they lay in the death chamber, I felt an oppressive loneliness. I was secure in the Lokamanya's presence. But by his departure I felt hopelessly insecure. I could differ from him and express my difference in respectful terms, but we could never misunderstand each other. I could not feel so with his followers not because they would want to distrust me but because, being without a guide whose word was law to them, they would always feel insecure and hesitant about my views and not in perfect agreement among themselves. Division in their ranks was the last thing in the world I desired. I have more than once expressed my admiration for the Maharashtra party. It has a determined policy. It is well-drilled. It is able. It has a record of great sacrifice behind it. I wanted and want still to capture not to divide the party. I wanted and still want to convert it to my view of the means for the attainment of Swaraj. With Lokamanya alive, I had only

him to convert or to be converted by him. He had an instinctive perception of things and situations. As he said to me, 'if the people follow your method, I am yours.'

But to-day there is a divided Maharashtra. If however my faith in Satyagraha is immutable, I must conquer Maharashtra as I hope to conquer Englishmen. But I must have the help of Maharashtra no-changers. If they have understood the secret of non-violence and truth, they must actively love the pro-changers even whilst they differ from them. They must not criticise them. Each party has enough work to do without flying at each other's throats.

Two distinguished friends have appealed to me to bring the two parties together and lead them. One of them in the course of a long letter says, 'To my mind there is no more necessary or radical contradiction but only a difference between the Tilak policy and the Gandhi policy than between submarine blockade and aeroplane attack. Indeed the two can work together, (but along separate lines—the Tilak policy within the Councils, the Gandhi policy in the country outside, at large) in open, express and therefore righteous alliance against the common enemy for the common good.' These sentences put forth the position clearly up to a point. I say 'up to a point' because my conception of non-co-operation is exclusive of participation in the Councils. That may be and is my limitation. One man cannot control both the movements—those of the submarine and the aeroplane. Nor can the two directors change places though both may have a common aim. I can strengthen the work in the Councils only by working outside and even by decrying the councils and thus turning the attention of the people away from them. The better analogy for my purpose is that of anti-septic and aseptic treatment. The two cannot be applied at the same time and on the same patient. But the surgeons belonging to the two schools may try their methods on different patients likely to submit to them and can do so without hampering each other. The same friend says further, 'While Tilakji and Gandhiji remain unreconciled

the heart of India will continue to be torn between the two and will not be able to settle down to steady work.' If such a catastrophe happens, if the country does not 'settle down', I would prove indeed an unskilful surgeon and an indifferent representative of my own method. I assure the friend and the reader that I am all attention. It is a matter of no pleasure to me that the strain continues. It will not, however, continue a day longer than is inevitable.

I invite assistance of the no-changers in hastening the process of settling down. The no-changers' faith consists in working from within and in that only. They can, therefore, religiously gag themselves. They will turn out better work. They must not retaliate. In every case where a fight in the shape of canvassing or wire-pulling is required, they may relinquish the Congress control. The pro-changers cannot afford to do without out-side activity and agitation. They may therefore control the press and the Congress organisation if they choose. I would like, by their consent, to keep the Congress a mass organisation, which it can only be, if the workers concentrate their attention upon that to the exclusion of everything else. But it cannot be so kept if there has to be a pitched and bitter fight between two parties. In that case the no-changers must, even if it is possible by manoeuvring to secure a majority, surrender control with the greatest good grace to the pro-changers. Let us recognise this one fact. The masses do not yet actively participate in or understand our method of work. Only workers in their midst can gain influence over them. I could quote a dozen illustrations of silent workers who have more influence with the masses than any of our notable orators. We must not, therefore, use the masses as pawns in the game. Nor should control of the Congress be surrendered in a manner to embarrass the pro-changers. The passage to their hands must be decorous and frank, without mental reservations. Such delivery can only be made by those who have a living faith in the charkha and who will grudge to take away a single minute from it and its organisation.

But whether the no-changers appreciate and follow my advice or not, I hope, God willing, to prove my faith by completest surrender at a time and in a manner that cannot embarrass the pro-changers and cannot compromise the national cause. When I have succeeded in so doing, not before, I shall have paid my humble tribute to the memory of the Lokamanya. I can deserve the heritage left by him only by being true to myself.

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*4th September, 1924*

#### WHAT ABOUT THE PRESIDENT ?

BY M. K. GANDHI

The uncertainty as to the President-ship too is a cause of suspense to many. I am sorry that I should have become the cause of uncertainty and suspense ever since my return to public life. I am sorry for it. But what cannot be cured must be endured. I still do not know where I stand. I am not going to preside for the purpose of division. I will accept the honour if my acceptance serves the nation in any way. The fact is I am tired of these divisions. I read *Faust* in the Yerawada jail for the second time. My first reading of it years ago left no impression on me. I could not catch Goethe's message. I do not know that I have even now. I may claim to have understood it somewhat. Margaret is sore at heart and troubled. She finds no relief from her misery save by going to the spinning wheel and to the music of the wheel giving vent to her grief. I was much struck by the whole conception. Margaret is alone in her room torn within with doubt and despair. The poet sends her to her wheel lying in a corner in the room. The reader may be sure she had a well-chosen library of books, a few paintings and a copy of hand written and illustrated *Bible*. She finds no solace either in the paintings or the books or for Margaret the Book of books. She

involuntarily goes to the wheel and finds peace in refusing to find it. Here are the noble lines:—

“ My peace is gone, and my heart is sore:  
I have lost him, and lost him, for evermore!  
The place, where he is not, to me is the tomb,  
The world is sadness and sorrow and gloom!  
My poor sick brain is crazed with pain;  
And my poor sick heart is torn in twain!  
My peace is gone and my heart is sore,  
For lost is my love for evermore!

You may paraphrase them a little and the verses almost represent my condition. I seem to have lost my Love too and feel distracted. I feel the abiding presence of my Lover and yet he seems to be away from me. For he refuses to guide me and give clear-cut injunctions. On the contrary, like Krishna, the arch mischief-maker to the Gopis, he exasperates me by appearing, disappearing and reappearing. When I see the light steadily before my eyes, I shall see my way clear and ask the reader to follow me.

Meanwhile I can only take up the wheel or speak or write about it and commend it to the reader. In my loneliness, it is my only infallible friend and comforter. May it be so to the reader. One friend at least equally tossed like Margaret and me says “ Fortunately you have left the spinning wheel for us. I am therefore consoling myself as much as I can by spinning.”

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*4th September, 1924*

### LOWEST COMMON MEASURE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The readers of *Young India* will find in the summary of my speech at the Excelsior Theatre, Bombay, an idea developed for the purpose of bringing together all the various elements in the country that are at present working against one another often without knowing that they are doing so. Everybody is asking

me to bring these together. I am therefore trying to see what can bring these elements together. In other words what are the things in which the majority of those who have at all taken part in moulding public life can or do agree or which are indispensable for our internal growth. Though the external may have its use, constituted as I am, I have all my life thought of growth from within. External appliances are perfectly useless if there is no internal reaction. When a body is perfect within, it becomes impervious to external adverse influences and is independent of external help. Moreover when the internal organs are sound they automatically attract external help. Hence the proverb God helps those who help themselves. If therefore we would all work to bring about internal perfection we need not take up any other activity at all. But whether we do so for or not at least the Congress may restrict itself to internal development alone.

What then is this lowest common measure necessary for such growth? I have always suggested the spinning wheel and khaddar, unity among all the religions; and removal by Hindus of untouchability, I hardly think that there is any difference of opinion about the last two items. I know there is still a difference of opinion as to the national necessity of the spinning wheel and khaddar and the method of working it. I have endeavoured to show elsewhere why khaddar is a necessity of national existence and universal spinning is the only method.

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*4th September, 1924*

WHEN WILL IT END?

BY M. K. GANDHI

People are however asking, 'when will this suspense all end?'. So far as I am concerned it is all ended. I have no fight left in me, I do not propose to fight the Swarajists at the forthcoming Congress. Nor do I wish to fight the Moderates. I have no terms or my only terms are the beggar's bowl. I ask the Swarajist, the Moderate, the Liberal, the Conventionist to throw into it yarn of their own spinning. Such being my mental condition I can but advice all the national workers

simply to concentrate their effort on spinning, on promoting unity, and if Hindus on removing untouchability.

But the no-changers further ask how about Congress Committees? My own opinion is that the constitution has broken down. We have no electorate worth the name. Where there is a respectable number on the roll, it is not of those who take a lively interest in the Congress proceedings. We are therefore almost a self-appointed electorate and self-appointed representatives. With such an electorate bitterness is inevitable when there are rival candidates. Impartiality is possible only when the electorate is large, intelligent and independent. My advice therefore is that where there is the slightest possibility of friction and opinion is known to be evenly balanced the no-changers should withdraw from the contest. They may keep office or keep their majority where there is no possibility of friction and where opinion is overwhelmingly in their favour. There should be no manipulation, no manoeuvring. It is a terrible responsibility workers take upon their shoulders when they exploit electorates. Corruption is the bane of governments by majority. Let those at least who know better be no party to it.

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*11th September, 1924*

## FRAUD BY CONGRESSMEN

BY M. K. GANDHI

In poor Orissa some so-called Congressmen are reported to have misappropriated Congress funds to the extent of several thousand rupees. One man had adopted the role of an ascetic and appeared to be working so zealously that he began to command influence and confidence till at last he was appointed to a position of trust. The question of dealing with the fraud became very serious and still remains so. The matter was referred to me and I had no hesitation in advising proceedings and suggesting that the Congress official who trusted the defaulter should after finishing the case resign office if necessary for



breach of the boycott resolution. This boycott of law courts cannot be allowed to be used by so-called Congressmen to defraud the Congress itself. Private parties if they are non-co-operators may beware of engagements that may involve them in law suits. But as between Congress men and as regards Congress affairs, in other words in matters of trust, it will defeat the very purpose of the boycott if unscrupulous people under cover of the boycott sought by belonging to the Congress to defraud the institution itself. At the risk therefore of being considered inconsistent I have no hesitation whatsoever in advising the Congress officials in Orissa to take legal proceedings against the culprits for the recovery of trust funds and then tendering resignation, if need be. If I were president of the Congress Committee I should not only authorise the official concerned to take legal proceedings but after his resignation endeavour to have the official reinstated for zealous discharge of his duty. The saving of Congress funds is as much a duty as the retention of the boycott of law courts. As a matter of fact the Congress official who may be the plaintiff or complainant in his representative capacity commits no personal breach of the boycott resolution. It is the Congress that does it. And the Congress has a perfect right to break its own law in its own favour. In a well ordered state the maxim, 'The king can do no wrong,' has a legitimate purpose and place.

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*11th September, 1924*

### THE REALITIES

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is possible that the reader is being disturbed by the bewildering changes he may be noticing at present in the *Young India* writings. I can assure him that they are not changes but they are a distinct advance in the direction we are going or should go. They are natural corollaries to the principles we profess.

If we will remember that NON-VIOLENCE is more important than non-co-operation and that the latter without the former is a sin, what I am at present developing in these pages will be as clear as daylight. The difficulty, however, is that the reader does not know much of what is going on behind the scenes. I am restraining myself partly on purpose and partly because I cannot do otherwise. It is difficult to pass on decisions from moment to moment and from day to day to the fellow-workers. I must simply trust that as they are in my opinion the necessary corollary to the main principle, they will be as plain to the reader as they are to me.

The fact is, action must vary with every varying circumstance. It is not inconsistent, if it springs from the same source.

What must be however apparent to every one is that our differences are increasing. Each group is making of its programme a matter of principle. Each sincerely believes that its programme will bring us nearer to the common goal. So long as there is a body of people in the country—and it is a large if not a growing body—so long will there be parties prosecuting the Councils programme. Our non-co-operation therefore has taken the form of non-co-operation in practice with one another instead of the Government. Without wishing it we are weakening one another and to that extent helping the system we are all seeking to destroy. Let us recognise its chief characteristic. It is parasitical and derives nutrition from the fungi of national life.

Our non-co-operation was meant to be a living, active, non-violent force matched against the essential violence of the system. Unfortunately the non-co-operation never became actively non-violent. We satisfied ourselves with physical non-violence of the weak and helpless. Having failed to produce the immediate effect of destroying the system, it has recoiled upon us with double strength and now bids fair to destroy us, if we do not take care betimes. I for one, am therefore determined not to participate in the domestic wrangle but would

even invite all concerned to do likewise. If we cannot actively help, we must not hinder. I am just as keen a believer as ever in the five boycotts. But I clearly see, as I did not at the time of the A. I. C. C. meeting, that whilst we maintain them in our own persons, there is no atmosphere for working them. There is too much distrust in the air. Every action is suspected and misinterpreted. And whilst we carry on a war of explanation and counter-explanation, the enemy at the door is rejoicing and consolidating his forces. We must avoid this almost at any cost.

I have therefore suggested that we should find out the lowest common measure among all the political parties and invite them all to co-operate on the Congress platform for achieving that common measure. This is the work of internal development without which there will be no effective external political pressure. The politicians who put the external work before the internal, or who think (which is the same thing) that the internal is too slow for them should have the greatest freedom to develop their strength, but in my opinion, this should be outside the Congress platform. The Congress must progressively represent the masses. They are as yet untouched by politics. They have no political consciousness of the type our politicians desire. Their politics are confined to bread and salt—I dare not say butter, for millions do not know the taste of ghee or even oil. Their politics are confined to communal adjustments. It is right however to say that we the politicians do represent the masses in opposition to Government. But if we begin to use them before they are ready we shall cease to represent them. We must first come in living touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants. With the pariahs we must be pariahs and see how we feel to clean the closets of the upper classes and have the remains of their table thrown at us. We must see how we like being in the boxes, miscalled houses, of the labourers of Bombay. We must identify ourselves with the villagers who

toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their cloths and pots and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am wrting this, respond to every call.

"We cannot all do this, and if we are to do this, good-bye to Swaraj for a thousand years and more," some will say. I shall sympathise with the objection. But I do claim that some of us at least will have to go through the agony and out of it only will a nation full, vigorous and free be born. I suggest to all that they should give their mental co-operation and that they should mentally identify themselves with the masses, and as a visible and tangible token thereof, they should earnestly spin for at least thirty minutes per day in their name and for their sake. It will be a mighty prayer from the intelligentia among the Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians and others of India, rising up to Heaven for their, that is, India's deliverance.

I see no way of removing the Hindu-Muslim tension, which is becoming daily tenser, save by all the parties coming together on the Congress platform and devising the best method of solving a problem which seems to defy solution and to dash to pieces all the fond hope we had of securing a national freedom that is broad based upon mutual trust and mutual help. If for no other reason, let us, at least for the sake of achieving unity, give up the internecine political strife.

Here is my proposal to that end.

(1) The Congress should suspend all the boycotts except that of foreign cloth till the session of 1925.

(2) The Congress should subject to (1) remove the boycott of Empire goods.

(3) The Congress should confine its activity solely to the propaganda of handspinning and handspun khaddar, the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity, and in addition, its Hindu member's activity to the removal of untouchability.

(4) The Congress should carry on the existing national educational institutions; and if possible, open more and keep them independent of Government control or influence.

(5) The four-anna franchise should be abolished and in its place the qualification for membership should be spinning by every member for half an hour per day and delivery to the Congress from month to month of at least 2000 yards of self-spun yarn, cotton being supplied where the member is too poor to afford it.

It is necessary to say a word about the proposed radical change in the Congress constitution. I may be pardoned for saying that I am the principal author of the Congress constitution. It was intended to be the most democratic in the world, and if successfully worked, to bring Swaraj without more. But it was not so worked. We had not sufficient honest and able workers. It must be confessed that it has broken down in the sense in which it was intended. We never had even one crore of members on the roll. At the present moment probably our nominal roll does not exceed two lacs for all India. And the vast majority of these too are as a rule not interested in our proceedings save for paying four annas and voting. But what we need is an effective, swiftmoving, cohesive, responsive organisation containing intelligent, industrious, national workers. Even if we are a few only, we should give a better account of ourselves than a cumbrous and slow body with no mind of its own. The only boycott proposed to be retained is that of foreign cloth and if we are to make it successful, we can only do so by making the Congress for a time predominantly a spinners' association. It will be a great triumph and a great demonstration, if we succeed in one constructive item of a striking magnitude. I hold that the only possible thing of the kind is handspinning and handspun khaddar. If we are to make of khaddar a national success, the spinning wheel is the only thing. If we are permanently to interest the masses in the national welfare of the country, the spinning wheel is the only

medium. If we are to banish pauperism from the land, the spinning wheel again is the only remedy.

The implications of my proposals are that

- (a) The Swarajists should be free to organise themselves without any opposition from the Congress or no-changers.
- (b) The members of other political bodies should be invited and induced to join the Congress.
- (c) The no-changers should be precluded from carrying on any propaganda either direct or indirect against Council-entry.
- (d) Those who do not personally believe in any of the four boycotts will be free, without any disgrace whatsoever, to act as if they did not exist. Thus non-co-operating lawyers will be free to resume practice if they chose and title holders, school masters &c., will be free to join the Congress and be eligible to the executive.

The scheme enables all the political parties to work unitedly for the internal development. The Congress presents a suitable opportunity for a conference of all political parties and outside the Congress to frame a Swaraj scheme acceptable to all and for presentation to the Government. Personally I am of opinion that time has not arrived for any such presentation. I believe that it would increase our internal strength beyond expectation, if we could all simply unite to make the foregoing constructive programme a success. But a large number of those who have hitherto led the country think otherwise. In any event a Swaraj scheme for the sake of ourselves is a necessity. As the reader will remember, I am in this matter a complete convert to Babu Bhagwandas's view. I would therefore join any such conference, if my presence was required, and assist at framing the scheme. The reason for insisting on this matter being treated as an activity outside the Congress is to keep the Congress purely for internal development for full one year. When we have achieved a measure of success com-

mensurate with the task before us, the Congress may function for outside political activity.

What if the proposal is not accepted and it is found difficult to bring together all parties on the Congress platform and to heal the breach between the Swarajists and ourselves? My answer is simple. If the whole fight is for 'capturing' the Congress, I must refuse to enter upon it. I would advise all who think with me to do likewise. I would advise handing the Congress over to the Swarajists on their terms and leave the Swarajists to work the Councils programme unhampered by any counter propaganda. I would engage the no-changers purely on the constructive programme and advise them to seek such help from the other parties as they can give.

Those who depend for national regeneration solely on the constructive programme, may be expected to lead in the matter of self-sacrifice. Not one of the things we hold dear can be achieved by trying to retain power in the Congress in opposition to the Swarajists. We must hold it on their sufferance. Both parties will be guilty of corrupting the simple people who worship the name 'Congress', if they are made at our bidding to engage in a suicidal tug of war. Power that comes from service faithfully rendered ennobles. Power that is sought in the name of service and can only be obtained by a majority of votes is a delusion and snare to be avoided, especially at the present moment.

Whether I have convinced the reader of the soundness of my proposal or not my mind is made up. It hurts me to think that those with whom I have hitherto worked hand in glove should be working in a seemingly opposite direction.

What I have sketched above is not conditions of surrender. Mine is an unconditional surrender. I would guide the Congress next year only if all parties wish me to. I am trying to see daylight out of this impenetrable darkness. I seem to see it dimly. But I may be still wrong. All I know is that there is no fight left in me. This is much for a born fighter to say. I have fought my dearest ones. But I fight out of love. I

should fight the Swarajists too out of love. But I must, I see, first prove my love. I thought I had proved it. I see I was wrong. I am therefore retracing my steps. I ask everyone to help me to do so and to reunite the two wings on a common platform. The Congress must, for sometime to come at least, remain largely a homogeneous body.

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*18th September, 1924*

Dr. ANNIE BESANT'S DECLARATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

The reader will, I hope, join me in welcoming Dr. Annie Besant's declaration\* on the situation. It is to me a matter of great importance that she should recognise the necessity of spinning by way of example by every worker in the national cause. Her example must mean much for the spinning movement. That at her age the gifted lady should consent to devote half an hour, in the midst of her incessant activity, to spinning speaks volumes for her devotion to the national cause.

So far as the constitution of the Congress is concerned, there is evidently some confusion. There is no question of suspending it. It will need amending, if my proposal about spinning is accepted. The non-co-operation programme, including civil disobedience, is not part of the constitution. That programme will, if my proposals are accepted, be certainly suspended for one year. My share in the framing of a Swaraj scheme would be this. I would attend, if required, any non-official conference of different parties to frame the scheme. I would be bound by the majority vote in the sense that I would not threaten civil disobedience or non-co-operation, merely because the scheme does not satisfy me—not even after the year of grace is over—provided the majority are satisfied with it. I would actively work for the scheme, if it satisfies my minimum. I may here say a word about the Congress constitution. I

\* See page 384.



observe critics ascribing to me the opinion that the constitution has been an absolute failure. It has certainly broken down as measured by its own standard. But in my opinion it cannot be seriously denied that the Congress still remains the most national and representative of all the organisations of India. It still has the largest number of original members on its books and has the largest number of volunteers and paid workers of any organisation. Nor do I wish to be understood to mean that non-co-operation has absolutely failed. On the contrary, it has vitalised the nation as nothing else has. But it has not come up to the expectations formed of it. The response of the people was great, but not great enough for the purpose intended. All this, however, is small comfort to the workers, who have yet much work to do before they can reap the harvest.

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#### FOR UNITY

BY ANNIE BESANT

Mr. Gandhi has spoken out quite plainly in *Young India* as to the lines on which he desires to shape a United Congress. I am therefore, free to state my side of the case, and the decision to which I have come, in which my closest followers agree.

Mr. Gandhi says that in his opinion, "the Congress Constitution has broken down. We have no electorate worth the name... We are therefore almost a self-appointed electorate and self-appointed representatives." The aspect of Satyagrah presented to the public had been that of Civil Disobedience and Non-co-operation. Over this, quarrel had arisen. There must be some things on which we could all unite and for the prosecution of which we could all meet under the same roof. The spinning wheel, unity between the different communities, and the removal by Hindus of untouchability were the items on which perhaps all could unite.

Mr. Gandhi suggested, when I met him in Bombay, that the Congress should for a year suspend from its programme

the constitution which had broken down, since it had not been carried out—Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience—these being the things that divided us. I accept the three things he suggested, on which we could unite. Apart from these, we should be free to follow our own lines of political activity, but the Congress should be responsible only for the items he mentioned, these being obligatory on all Congressmen.

To the unity between communities and the removal of untouchability I agreed at once. In fact, at the very beginning of the conversation I had offered to work with him on these and also on temperance, excluding picketing, which always led to violence sooner or later.

Remained the spinning-wheel as a village industry including the hand-loom. I agreed with this, and had long used, materials thus produced. As I said in 1913 village industries are absolutely necessary, owing to the considerable amount of time left unoccupied if agriculture alone is followed. I have long urged that the disappearance of village-industries and of village self-government and the communal holding of the village-land were the chief causes of the terrible poverty of the masses, and that the restoration of these was essential not only to prosperity but to Swaraj. (See my lecture in 1913 on "Village Industries and Self-government"). But Mr. Gandhi desired more than this theoretical agreement : he wanted the Congressman to spin for half-an-hour a day whatever his rank or profession. His reasons put briefly were : There was a large number of hand-loomers lying idle for want of yarn, the villagers, he had lived among them, were hopeless of any real improvement in their condition, and he wanted those who had no need to spin to set them an example, for it would give them hope of practical sympathy, and also they would follow an example, while they were too hopeless to obey a precept ; no one was too busy to give half-an hour a day to help in the redemption of the peasantry by working with them at one thing. I remarked that I travelled much and could not carry a *charkha* about with me ; he retorted triumphantly that

a *charkha* was unnecessary, and produced his son to show that it only needed a twirl-gig, less than a foot long, the use of which could be mastered in ten or fifteen minutes. The reasons seemed to me to be cogent and above all there was the question of a United Congress; obviously there was no principle against spinning for half-an-hour a day; if only this stood between the Congress and myself, I would gladly agree to "do my bit," there being nothing I would not do to secure a United Congress, except a thing which I believed to be wrong.

It is, of course, to be definitely understood that every one is to be free to follow the particular road to Swaraj that he believes to be the best, i. e., to take myself, I continue to work as President of the National Home Rule League, as General Secretary of the National Conference and Convention, for I am pledged to work for Swaraj-Dominion Home Rule—by obtaining a constitution establishing it as soon as possible, by constitutional means, and made by Indians; also containing a clause giving power to amend it. I mentioned this to Mr. Gandhi and he said that he would like to take part in the discussion of such a constitution, and would be bound by the vote of the majority. I asked him if I was right in thinking that he had said that in the political field he meant by Swaraj Parliamentary Self-government; and he said "yes."

I am prepared to endorse the three proposals of Mr. Gandhi as the Congress programme, and I will rejoin the Congress, when those in authority also accept them on behalf of the Congress, or if there be no power to do this, then if the All India Congress Committee will promise to put before the Belgaum Congress, as early as possible, a resolution accepting, them, so that I may be able, if I can reach Belgaum in time, to be present before the end of the Congress. It would be useless for me to go if the Congress should reject Mr. Gandhi's proposals, the only conditions on which I could re-enter it.

Would it be possible for each of the organised bodies which are working for Swaraj to elect, say, 20 persons from their officers and members to meet in a Parliamentary Conference at

a central place like Allahabad, about the third week in November, under the presidency of a man not belonging to any party, to discuss and if possible agree on a draft outlining the form of Swaraj as they envisage it, and to submit this draft to the several bodies which elected them for discussion or amendment? There are the All India Congress Committee, the Liberal Federation, the National Convention (including the Council of the National Home Rule League), the Swarajya Party, the Muslim League and the Independent Party. The delegates of each of these organisations might usefully bring with them rough drafts as bases for discussion and any suitable materials they may have. In January or in early February the delegates should meet again with the resolutions of the bodies they represent—several meet in Christmas week—on the draft or drafts submitted to them, and draw up final draft Bill, to be thrown into the proper parliamentary form by competent draftsmen.

I hope to submit this plan to members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly in Simla, and take their advice.

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*16th October, 1924*

## SPINNING FRANCHISE

BY M. K. GANDHI

‘Spinning as a voluntary sacrifice is all right, but as a qualification for franchise it is galling.’ This is the substance of the objection that I hear against my proposal. I must confess I am surprised at the objection, for it is offered not because it is spinning that matters, but because with the critics it is the restriction, the obligation that matters. But why? If a monetary qualification, that is, restriction, may be imposed, why not a working qualification? Is it more honourable to pay than to labour? Is it galling in a temperance association to require every member to be a teetotaler? Is it galling in a naval association to require every member to possess certain naval

qualifications? Is it galling, say, in France where military skill is considered a necessity of national existence, to require every member to practise the use of arms? If it is not galling to have the requisite test in any of these cases, why should it be galling in an Indian National Assembly to have spinning and the wearing of khaddar, which is a national necessity, to be the qualification for the franchise, or which is the same thing, the test of membership? Is it not the easiest and readiest method of popularising it and bringing it home to the people? Of course, my argument is addressed only to those who regard it as absolutely necessary that India should be self-contained in so far as her clothing is concerned and that, principally, through the spinning wheel and the hand-loom.

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6th November, 1924

### AN IMPORTANT LETTER

BY S. E. STOKES

[While Mr. S. E. Stokes was in Delhi, he told me some of his own difficulties concerning the 'Spinning Franchise'. At that time, it was not possible for him to discuss the matter with Mahatma Gandhi. But he sent me instead an important letter, which I asked to be read to Mahatma Gandhi during the fast. A further letter has since come from him upon the same subject, which I am submitting to Mahatmaji at Mr. Stokes' own request. The former letter, after discussing the Unity Conference, ended in the paragraphs quoted below. C. F. A.]

I began to write this letter, without a thought of discussing the conference. It was to talk to you of spinning. Your article on the subject in *Young India* interested me and prompted me to tell you how I feel on the subject, with special reference to Mahatmaji's desire that it should be made the basis of franchise for the National Congress. I should like you, if you think proper, to show Mahatmaji what I am writing to you on this subject, for it seems to me to be a very important one.

As you know, I am in favour of hand-spinning, and fully agreed with Mahatmaji in the burning of foreign cloth at the time when he asked the people to do it. We burned ours then and do not regret it, and since then we have worn hand-spun, and spinning has been carried on in our home, as it is in all *Pahari* homes. I have never spun personally in the past. I am now spinning half an hour or more a day and expect to continue it. I do so because I can appreciate its value as a voluntary act of self-discipline, and because I feel that the discipline of Mahatmaji and his love and suffering for his fellows entitles him to ask it, as a voluntary act of discipline upon the part of those who hope to share in the fruits of his self-sacrifice. Also,—and just because I and other men will rather be following our own particular inclinations,—I see it as an act of self-renunciation, which if we undertake it in the proper spirit and in large numbers, will without doubt make us more fit for self-government nationally as well as individually. When so undertaken it *is* an act of individual self-government. And to the extent that Indians impose this or any other discipline upon themselves in matters that they find irksome and uninteresting, for the sake of an ideal that they wish to attain, the nation will have laid the foundations of character essential to the only form of political Swaraj worth having.

As I have said, I am spinning and expect to continue it; but I cannot for a moment accept the idea of *compulsory* spinning as the *sine qua non* of participation in the Congress. Every one who seeks to serve India honestly and faithfully, no matter what are his particular views as to the nature of his service should be entitled to belong to the national body. To me their value of spinning for men lies in its being a voluntary self-discipline, a self-imposed act of *tapasya* bearing no fruit except in the things of the spirit. To make it anything else is to take away its chief value, and to impose it upon those who do not believe in it as the door of admission to participation in the common national endeavour is to render it positively harmful. Though I should continue to spin, I should never feel able to—

accept the *fact* that I spun as my right to a place in the Congress; and rather than accept such a principle, I should feel compelled to stay outside the Congress. I feel that I understand why Mahatmaji wishes it. He wants to turn membership in the Congress into a reality so that its members will be only such as are ready to discipline themselves in order to belong to it. The end I agree with, but not the means. It is a matter of principle which goes deeper than any immediate advantage. His victory will be in voluntary acceptance upon the part of *each* of a discipline, the value of which is individually recognise—an acceptance the genuineness of which does not need to submit its spinning to Khaddar Boards. His victory will not lie in bringing about the forced submission to what they cannot approve of by a minority of those who wish to faithfully serve their country in the Congress.

To me the whole question is concerned with the value of personality and of character. As you know, I consider these values to hold the supreme place and the most vital significance in the world of self's evolving experience. The highest values are moral values and character values. Therefore, though there might be a distinct economic value in compelling all Indians to spin, the moral value of spinning or of any other act of self-discipline for an ideal would be nil, even if all Indians spun subject to whatever form of compulsion. It must be *nishkama karma* not *kamyā karma*—if it is to have a moral value to the nation. It must be the work of a morally free and an uncompelled people. And though an economic value is doubtless significant in laying the foundations of a nation's life, the moral value is even more essential. For it is upon the character of those who constitute a nation that its capacity to function nationally must be grounded.

This letter has become longer than I had intended, but I am so certain that the issues involved are vital that I hope you will forgive it.

*The following notes by Mahatma Gandhi on the Agreement\* appeared in 'Young India' of 13th November, 1924.*

## HOW TO WORK

In these notes I propose to take up the agreement between the Swaraj party and myself where I have left it in the leading article. If our recommendation is accepted by the forthcoming meeting, it means revolutionising the Congress organisation and turning the members from being merely vote-registering machines once or twice a year into day-to-day workers and contributing materially to the chief national activity. It will make the Congress a huge manufacturing and receiving and distributing depot. The work cannot be organised without method, industry, punctuality, patriotism, self-sacrifice and strictest honesty and the required skill. Though anybody can become a Congress member by paying four annas till the Congress accepts the proposal, if the forthcoming meeting approves of the proposals every province must begin to organise as if the franchise was accepted by the Congress. That is to say, propaganda must be carried on among the existing members advising them of the proposed change and providing them with the necessary facility for learning spinning and procuring the wheel &c. The question will have to be considered as to how the yarn is to be collected and how disposed of. Without any Congress resolution, save the one applicable to members of Congress executives, and by simple exhortation through these columns we have today over seven thousand men and women spinning voluntarily. Their number is on the increase. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that when and if the Congress accepts the franchise proposal we should be able to reach at least one hundred thousand in a few months. Assuming the average output of yarn to be 5 tolas of 20 counts per month per member it would mean 312.5 maunds of yarn per month or 12500 dhotis or saris 45 inches in width and 6 yards in length. And when we

\* See pp. 395, 397 and 398.



remember that labour on the material upto spinning is to be free the dhotis must compete with any similar article on the market. If only the nation could concentrate all effort on this one national work, exclusion of foreign cloth can be achieved without the slightest difficulty and by means the most honourable and non-violent.

### THE FORTHCOMING MEETING

But all depends on the forthcoming meeting. It is to be a meeting not only of the A. I. C. C. but of representatives of all Provincial Committees and Associations. I hope that there will be a generous response on the part of these representatives to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation. The joint meeting will have to decide not only the question of healing the breach in the Congress itself but also of inducing other distinguished leaders to join the Congress. The meeting has also to frame an effective policy in answer to the Bengal repression. Whatever our differences as to the method of reaching our goal, there are no two opinions about the desirability of ending the exercise of arbitrary powers.

There is no freedom for India so long as one man, no matter how highly placed he may be, holds in the hollow of his hands the life, property and honour of millions of human beings. It is an artificial, unnatural and uncivilised institution. The end of it is an essential preliminary to Swaraj.

### OUR HELPLESSNESS

This is apparent. We seem to have lost all power beyond passing resolutions. But if we could all unite on the constructive programme, it will by itself be a step towards regaining self-confidence and power of action. It must be clear to everyone that if Hindus and Mussalmans regain their senses, if Hindus treat untouchables as their brothers and if we have so popularised spinning and khaddar as to be within easy reach of exclusion of foreign cloth, we should not need to do any more to command attention to our will. What is more we should need

neither secret societies for the promotion of violence nor open non-violent disobedience. Such a desirable consummation can be effected only by united, determined and ceaseless pursuit of the constructive programme. That, therefore, is my method of effective reply to the volcanic eruption of repression or the chronic and helpless subordination of a whole nation.

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## IS IT COMPULSION

The reader must have read Mr. Stokes' passionate protest\* against hand-spinning being made compulsory for every Congress member. It is evident to me that his excessive regard for liberty of the individual has disabled him from distinguishing between voluntary acceptance and compulsion. Compulsion means submission of protestants to the thing they oppose under pain of being fined or imprisoned. They cannot escape the obligation or the penalty by remaining outside the corporation of which they find themselves members. But when a man joins a voluntary association such as the Congress he does so willingly and tacitly or explicitly undertakes to obey its rules. These rules generally include submission of the minority to the wishes of the majority. The voluntary nature of every act of every member is clear from the fact that he can secede whenever the majority pass a rule which is in conflict with his conscience. Mr. Stokes' reasoning is subversive of all corporate self-government. Every franchise has some conditions attached to it. As a rule there is opposition from some to every form of restrictive franchise. May the opposers consider the restriction carried by the majority compulsion? Obviously not. For, if they may, then there can never be any corporate activity.

When the new Congress creed was passed in 1920, there was a minority that opposed it on principle and therefore seceded when it was carried by a majority. Under the old creed many more were kept out because they could not conscientious-

\* See page 388.

ly subscribe to it. In either case, I hold that the majority had a right to pass the rules. Whether in the one case the restriction was wise and in the other relaxation was unwise is a matter of opinion. And so in the matter of present proposal, to make hand-spinning part of the Congress franchise may be bad policy and may kill the very object that I have in view, but I submit that there is nothing inherently wrong in it, that it is not wrong in principle, that it is an unconscious misuse of language to call it compulsion. On merits I have no misgivings. If hand-spinning is an effective method of making India self-supporting it must be made part of the franchise. It is the best way of expressing national will and determination.

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*13th November, 1924*

### PUBLIC DEBTS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :

“ You may be aware that a resolution, moved by Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar in the open Congress at Gaya in the year 1922, regarding the repudiation of public debts that might be incurred by the Government of India after 31-12-'22, was passed. It is needless to state that many responsible men in the public life of our country are eager to know your views on the resolution. ”

I am sorry to have to confess my ignorance of the resolution in question. But now that it has been brought to my notice, I have no hesitation in approving of it. I congratulate both Mr. Rajagopalachari and the Congress, upon the passage of that resolution. We may be, as we are, powerless to day, but the world should know what we think of the wasteful and enormous expenditure of India's money. The late Lord Salisbury called it a process of bleeding. I should imagine that any Swaraj scheme would include an impartial inquiry into the:

commitments of the Government of India or the India Office and an insistence upon a readjustment of the the financial transactions of the outgoing Government. I, therefore, regard the resolution as both necessary and honourable. It may excite ridicule today. But, when we come to our own, we should be able to point with pride to the fact of our having given due notice. For, in spite of all I have said about the limitations of the Congress who can deny that it is the most representative of the nation? It is for us to make it so representative as to command respect and attention.

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*13th November, 1924*

### THE JOINT STATEMENT

The following is the text of the statement issued in Calcutta on the 6th inst. over the signatures of Mr. Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru :—

Whereas, although Swaraj is the goal of all the parties in India, the country is divided into different groups seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the nation towards Swaraj and whereas it is desirable to bring, so far as possible, all such parties within the Congress and on a common platform, and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections, resulting in harm to the country's cause, and whereas it is desirable to reunite these parties for the purpose of furthering the common cause, and whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the Local Government with the sanction of the Governor General, and whereas in the opinion of the undersigned this repression is aimed in reality not at any party of violence but at the Swaraj party in Bengal and therefore at constitutional and orderly activity, and whereas therefore it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the co-operation of all parties for putting forth the united strength of the nation against the policy of

repression, we, the undersigned, strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum :—

The Congress should suspend the programme of non-cooperation as the national programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

The Congress should further resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done, as may be found necessary, by the different sections within the Congress and should resolve that the spread of handspinning, handweaving and all the antecedent progress and the spread of handspun and handwoven khaddar and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them should be carried on by all sections within the Congress, and the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organisation and for such work the Swaraj party should make its own rules and raise and administer its own funds. In as much as experience has shown that without universal spinning India cannot become self supporting regarding her clothing requirements, and in as much as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and Congressmen and women and in order to popularise handspinning and its products the Congress should repeal Article VII of the Congress Constitution and should substitute the following therefor :—

“ No one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organisation who is not of the age of 18 and who does not wear handspun and handwoven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business, and does not make a contribution of 2000 yards of evenly spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning or in case of illness, unwillingness or any such causes a like quantity of yarn spun by any other person. ”

*13th November, 1924*

## AN INTERVIEW

The following interview on the question of the agreement arrived at between the leaders of the Swaraj party and Mr. Gandhi at Calcutta which a representative of the Associated Press of India, had with Mr. Gandhi on his return to Delhi on the 10th inst. is published:--

Asked as to why if the agreement signed by himself and Messrs. Das and Nehru was intended to be an invitation to Liberals and others to rejoin the Congress they had not conferred with them before issuing the appeal, Mr. Gandhi replied :

Such a Conference was impossible before the Swarajists and No-changers could agree upon a joint course, because any appeal must be a joint appeal by the two wings of the Congress.. As a matter of fact there has been no Conference even with the No-changers. It is true that I met the No-changers of Bengal and discussed the situation with them, as also I met, for instance, Mr. Satyanand Bose and discussed the matter with him. But I did not even make an endeavour to secure their assent for the simple reason that I had at my disposal no machinery whereby I could ascertain the wishes of the No-changers as a body and bind them formally. I, therefore, thought it best to give my own individual opinion and place it before the country for what it was worth. You will see that the agreement is a recommendation addressed to all parties within and without the Congress. The time for a Conference is now. The No-changers will express their opinion through the forthcoming All-India Congress Committee. Maulana Mahomed Ali as President of the Congress has invited to the Conference representatives of all parties including the European Association.

The recommendation made by the Swaraj party and myself will be submitted at the meeting for their sympathetic-

consideration. There is no finality about the agreement except for the Swaraj party and for myself personally. Everybody is free to appeal to our reason, and I am sure that neither the Swaraj party nor I will stand in the way of any other settlement that may bring all the parties together on a common platform and facilitate our progress towards the common goal and supply an effective answer to the Bengal Government's repressive policy on the one hand and satisfy the ambition of the misguided anarchists on the other, and thus wean them from their error. I appeal to all the leaders to accept Moulana Mahomed Ali's invitation and assist and guide the deliberations of the forthcoming Conference at Bombay.

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*13th November, 1924*

### THE AGREEMENT

BY M. K. GANDHI

I thank God that He gave me strength to surrender to the Swarajists all that it was possible for me to surrender—much more than I or many friends had expected. I must acknowledge my indebtedness to the Swarajists for their accommodation. I know that many do not put the same emphasis that I do on the constructive part of the programme. With many the stiffening of the franchise was the bitterest pill and yet for the sake of unity and for the sake of the country they have yielded. All honour to them for so doing.

The agreement puts Swarajists on a par with the Non-changers. It was inevitable if voting and all it means was to be avoided. Non-violence means utmost accommodation compatible with one's principles. Swarajists claim to be a growing body. That they have made an impression on the Government cannot be gainsaid. Opinions may differ as to its value but it is not possible to question the fact itself. They have shown determination, grit, discipline and cohesion and have not feared to carry their policy to the point of defiance. Once assume the

desirability of entering Councils and it must be admitted that they have introduced a new spirit into the Indian Legislatures. That their very brilliance takes the nation's mind away from itself is to one like me regrettable, but so long as our ablest men continue to believe in Council entry, we must make the best of the Legislatures. Though an uncompromising No-changer, I must not only tolerate their attitude and work with them, but I must even strengthen them wherever I can.

If they will not decide matters of important differences by means of the vote, the No-changers can carry on Congress work only by mutual consent and forbearance unless not wishing to fight, they will retire from Congress control altogether. It is recognised that neither party can do without the other. Both occupy an important position in the country. The Congress was weakened by the secession of the Liberals and the Besantites. The cleavage was inevitable because they were opposed to non-co-operation on principle. We must avoid further cleavage if it is at all possible. We must not lightly set up as principle mere matters of opinion and engage in pitched battles over them.

If the non-co-operation programme is suspended, as I feel sure it must be, it follows as a natural corollary, that the Swaraj party should have no odium attached to its activity. It is beside the purpose to say or examine what would have happened if the Congressmen had never thought of the Councils. We have to take the situation as it stands today and suit ourselves to it or make it suit us, if that is possible.

Lastly, the Bengal situation demanded that No-changers gave the Swaraj Party the strongest support that it was in their power to give.

'But' said some of the No-changers and others to me, "how can you subscribe to a document which says that the Government have really attacked the Swaraj Party and not the anarchists? Are you not unjust to the Government?" This attitude pleased me and flattered me. It pleased me to notice in my questioners a sincere



desire to do justice to a government they do not like. It flattered my pride in that my questioners expected from me exact judgment and fullest justice. I confessed to them that I had against the Government the greatest prejudice based on past experience; that the writings in the British and British owned Indian Press had prepared me for an attack on the Swaraj party, that it was the declared policy of the Government to lop off 'tall poppies' and that whilst it was possible that among the arrested there may be some with anarchical tendencies, it was nevertheless a fact, that the vast majority of them were Swarajists and that if it was a fact as the Government contended, that the anarchists were a large party, it was curious that the Government could find in the main only Swarajists to lay their hands upon. I told them further that if there was an extensive and active anarchical organisation, the fiercest spirits were likely to be outside the Swaraj party rather than inside it, that no arms, it is said were found by the police during their night search. Nothing that my questioners told me in reply shook my belief and I am inclined to think that if I did not bring my questioners round to my belief, I at least convinced them that I had good grounds for my opinion and that the burden lay upon the government to show that they had no designs upon the Swaraj Party in Bengal.

But the proposed suspension does not effect the individual non-co-operators. They are not only entitled to hold to their views but would be very little worth if they gave up their personal non-co-operation. For instance, suspension of the non-co-operation programme cannot mean for me recall of my medals or resumption of practice or sending my children to Government schools. Thus whilst suspension will leave a convinced non-co-operator free to retain his non-co-operation, for those who took up non-co-operation only as a policy and in obedience to the Congress call, it makes it open if they like, to recall their non-co-operation without the slightest stigma attaching to their so doing. Further, if suspension is agreed upon, it is not open to any Congressman as such to preach non-co-oper-

ation<sup>1</sup> as part of the Congress policy or programme. On the other hand it is open to him if he so chooses to dissuade people from taking up non-co-operation during the period of suspension.

Then there is the spinning franchise. I wanted much more khaddar on all occasions and spinning 2000 yards per month by all Congressmen except in case of illness or like disability. This has been watered down to wearing khaddar on political occasions and Congress business and spinning by deputy even for unwillingness. But here again it was not possible for me to insist upto the breaking point. In the first place the Maharashtra party had constitutional difficulty in agreeing to spinning or wearing khaddar being part of the franchise at all, and in the second place the Swaraj party as a body does not attach the same importance either to the wearing of khaddar or to hand-spinning. It does not consider them to be indispensable as I do either for the attainment of Swaraj or for the exclusion of foreign cloth. It was, therefore, from their standpoint a tremendous concession to their agreeing to make khaddar and handspinning part of the franchise even in the modified form. I, therefore, gratefully acknowledge the concession they have made for the sake of unity. Let those who are disposed to grumble at the modification remember that it is a great advance to rise from the nominal four anna franchise to a tangible and effective franchise that requires every Congressman to testify his belief in the desirability of making India self-supporting so far as her clothing requirements are concerned and that too by reviving the old Indian industry of hand-spinning and thus distributing wealth where it is most needed.

It has been urged that everybody will take advantage of the relaxation and the idea of spinning as sacrifice will break down and that the wearing of khaddar will be confined only to political occasions and Congress business. I should be sorry if such an untoward result were to follow the modification. Those who fear such disaster seem to forget that spinning by every Congressman was as yet a mere idea of one man. He has now

resigned himself to a modification of his proposal. Surely therefore, the embodiment in the franchise of the idea even in a modified form is a distinct gain and must increase the number of wearers of khaddar and voluntary spinners.

Moreover, it must be remembered that it is one thing to embody reforms in recommendatory or even obligatory resolutions; it is totally another thing to make them part of franchise. Any test for franchise should have no vagueness about it and should be easily capable of being carried out. For, inability to carry it out means disfranchisement. The wearing of khaddar on all occasions and for all purposes may not be possible even for the best of us.

In practice, however, it will be found that the vast majority of us who can ill afford a variety of costumes will find it necessary to wear khaddar on all occasions, if we have to wear it on all Congress occasions. For an ardent Congressman every occasion is a Congress occasion and he and she would be an indifferent Congressman or Congresswoman who has no Congress work during consecutive twentyfour hours. We should have on our roll thousands of voters or original members. They cannot have many uniforms nor can they have money to buy yarn spun by others. They must spin themselves and thus give at least half an hour's labour to the nation. And a Congress volunteer who does not spin himself will be hard put to it to convince the candidates for Congress membership of the necessity of spinning. Everything must, therefore, rest on an honest and loyal working of the proposal.

The agreement is what it professes to be—a strong recommendation. I have signed it in my individual capacity. Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru have signed it for the Swaraj Party. It, therefore, is a recommendation by the Swaraj Party and myself to all Congressmen and others for consideration and adoption. I want it to be considered on merits. I would urge everyone to eliminate me from consideration. Unless the recommendation is accepted on merits it will be difficult either to achieve the political unity we

want and should have to secure the exclusion of foreign cloth which we must have and which is possible only by universal spinning and universal use of khaddar. If the proposal to suspend non-co-operation or to give the Swaraj Party adequate hearty recognition in the Congress or to make the wearing of khaddar and hand-spinning, whether personally or by deputy, part of the franchise do not commend themselves to the Congressmen and the others who are invited they should reject them and unhesitatingly press their own solution in the attention of the nation. Deep cherished convictions cannot and must not be set aside from any consideration whatsoever.

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*20th November, 1924*

## ON TRIAL

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is not to be wondered at that No-changers are intensely dissatisfied with the agreement arrived at between the Swarajists and myself. I have repeatedly admitted that I am but an humble explorer of the science of non-violence. Its hidden depths sometimes stagger me just as much as they stagger fellow-workers. I observe that the agreement seems just now to satisfy no one but the parties to it. Many Englishmen regard it as an ignominious surrender to the Swarajists on my part. Many No-changers regard it as a lapse, if not a betrayal. A friend says that it has caused consternation among students. Why, they ask, should they remain in national schools if non-co-operation is suspended? They are the greatest sufferers and they have not been considered in the pact at all. I hold a letter from an Andhra friend which arrests attention and calls for a reasoned reply.

Surrender on my part it undoubtedly is. It is a conscious surrender, but not, as an English paper puts it, to the party of violence. I refuse to believe that the Swaraj party is a party of

violence. Such charges were, I know, levelled against even the late Dadabhai Naoroji and Justice Ranade. They were suspected and shadowed. Lala Harkishenlal who had no more to do with any party of violence than Sir Michael O'Dwyer himself was arrested and imprisoned by that satrap. I would have been false to the country if I had not stood by the Swaraj party in the hour of its need. Let it be unequivocally demonstrated that it has had anything to do with violence and I shall be prepared to denounce it in as strong language as is open to me to use. On such proof I shall sever all connection with it. But till then, I must stand by it even though I do not believe in the efficacy of council-entry or even some of the methods of conducting council warfare.

But recognition of the party as an integral part of the Congress does not mean surrender by individuals of their non-co-operation. It means an admission that the Swaraj Party is a strong and growing wing of the Congress. And if it refuses to take a back seat without a fight, and if it is necessary or even expedient to avoid a fight, the claim to a definite official recognition is irresistible. Every Congressman, however, is not by reason of his being a Congressman, assumed to be a believer in all the items of a Congress programme. My own position, I admit, is somewhat different. I have made myself instrument in bringing the agreement into being. I am not sorry for it. Rightly or wrongly, the country expects me to give it some guidance. And I have come to the conclusion that it is in the interest of the country to give the Swaraj party the fullest possible chance of working out its programme without let or hindrance from No-changers. The latter are not bound to participate in its activity, if they do not like it. They are free and bound, as the Swarajists are bound, to pursue the constructive programme only. They are free also to retain their individual non-co-operation. But suspension by the Congress means that non-co-operators can derive no support or strength from the Congress. They must derive all their strength from within. And that is their test and trial. If

their faith abides, it is well with them and non-co-operation. If it vanishes with suspension, non-cooperation dies as a force in public life. But a friend says "If you waver, what about lesser men?" I have not wavered. My faith in non-co-operation is as bright as ever. For it has been with me a principle of life for over thirty years. But I cannot impose my personal faith on others, never on a national organisation. I can but try to convince the nation of its beauty and usefulness. And if I find in reading the national mind, that the nation in so far as it is represented by the Congress must have breathing time, I must cry halt. I may misread the mind of the Congress. When that happens, I shall cease to be any force in the Congress. That will be no calamity. But it would be a calamity if by my obstinacy I stand in the way of the country's progress by other means, so long as they are not positively mischievous and harmful. I should for instance rise, even if I was alone, against methods of actual violence. But I have recognised that the nation has the right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by actual violence. Only then, India ceases to be the land of my love even though she be the land of my birth, even as I should take no pride in my mother if she went astray. But the Swaraj party is a party of orderly progress. It may not swear by non-violence as I do, but it accepts non-violence as a policy and it discountenances violence, because it considers it to be useless if not even harmful. It occupies a prominent position in the Congress. I do not know that if its strength was tested, it might not be found even to occupy a predominant position. It is easy enough for me to secede from the Congress and let the party run the Congress. That I can and will do when I find that I have nothing in common with the party. But so long as I have the faintest hope of its redemption, I shall cling to it like a child to its mother's breast. I will not weaken it by disowning or denouncing it or by retiring from the Congress.

I have used the word 'redemption' in no offensive sense. I too have my method of *Shuddhi* and *Tabligh*. It is the best the

world has yet seen. Conscious of my own ground and strength, I let the party act upon me and influence me as much as it will. It enables me to know it at its best. I make no secret of my intention that by coming under its influence, I hope to influence it in favour of my method. If in the process, it redeems me and converts me, all honour to it. I should then declare my conversion from the house top. It is *Shuddhi* by reason appealing to reason and heart speaking to heart. It is the non-violent method of conversion. Let non-co-operators join forces with me. At the same time let them remain firm in their individual conduct. If their non-co-operation springs from love, I promise that they will convert the Swarajists, and even if they don't succeed, they will have lost nothing, personally. If the country is with them, Swarajists, if they do not follow, will naturally take a back seat. And if the latter gain ground during the twelve months of grace, they must be undisputed masters of the Congress, and non-co-operators must be content to be in a minority. They may register me in advance as one of that minority.

The problem with the students is the same. Non-co-operation may be suspended, but schools will not be suspended. They are an accomplished fact. They are among the best fruit of non-co-operation. The students are, therefore, expected to keep the flag flying and show to the country that they can flourish even though the Congress may suspend the non-co-operation programme. It is poor faith that needs fair weather for standing firm. That alone is true faith that stands the foulest weather.

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*27th November, 1924*

## SHALL WE UNITE?

BY M. K. GANDHI

That the conference that met in Bombay last week did not result immediately in uniting all parties on a common platform shows the difficulty of the task. The appointment of a committee to consider the ways and means of bringing about a union shows that the conference does not consider the task to be hopeless or impossible. Indeed Mr. Jesukhlal Mehta who moved that the committee should report on or before 15th December next had a very fair number of supporters. They were quite sanguine of immediate success. The cautious many, by fixing the date of the report at 31st March, if they have realised the difficulty, have also by implication thrown on the committee the burden of finding an acceptable solution. Writers in the Press can considerably help the committee by guiding public opinion in the right channel. The chief bodies to influence the committee are the Liberals, the Independents and the National Home Rulers. The last led by Dr. Besant have practically accepted the position set forth in the agreement between the Swaraj party and me and now ratified by the A. I. C. C. The difficulties in the way of the Liberals and the Independents are practically the same. They are the creed, the transfer of all Council work to the Swaraj party and the franchise. It is said that the creed is equivocal. I venture to deny the charge. It is a recognition of the existing condition. It means Swaraj within the Empire if possible, and without if necessary. It is intended to throw the burden on Englishmen of making it possible for us to be and remain equal partners in the Empire. It manfully declares the country's ability to stand on its own legs as an absolutely independent nation, if it became necessary. Swaraj within the Empire is a free state, a voluntary remaining in the Empire, ability to secede if India thought it desirable. Swaraj within the



Empire must be a partnership at will between free nations. This is a vital position which cannot be surrendered. Even if those who are guiding the Congress at the present moment desired to alter the creed to mean Swaraj within the Empire only and therefore that of a subject State, the vast majority of Congressmen will decline to accept the humiliation. To aim at changing the creed in the direction desired by the Liberals and the Independents is to run counter to the present national temper. The only thing they can do is to join the Congress and attempt to convince Congressmen of the utility or the necessity of the change, even as Maulana Hasrat Mohani has been attempting to change the creed so as to make independence of British connection the only goal of the Congress. I respectfully submit that there is nothing immoral or harmful in the present creed. On the contrary, the admission that, at the present moment at least, we are impotent for independence may be open to the gravest objection from an ethical standpoint. No nation that has the will, need be powerless for independence. In any case, I trust that all parties will recognise that the Congress has an electorate which can become insistent at times and that it is well that it is so.

What status the Swarajists should hold in the Congress is really for them to determine. They and the No-changers today dominate the Congress. If the Congress suspends non-co-operation, the Swarajists perhaps *ipso facto* become predominant. And if both the parties decide in the national interest not to divide the Congress, they must be recognised as joint and equal partners. What I have done is to recognise this simple and natural fact in the Calcutta agreement. If any party desires more, it can be obtained only by joining the Congress and appealing to the reason of the Swarajists or by educating the Congress electorate, *and also by forming new electorates*. The scope for widening the Congress electorate is infinite, and practically anybody can form Congress circles, or committees, if he can find men and women of his way of thinking.

The third objection is the franchise. If it were not for its novelty, it would not only not excite any surprise ; but it would be welcomed as the best franchise test. Had it been workmen who had been the most influential people and not capitalists or educated men and a property or an education test had been proposed, the powerful workmen would have ridiculed the suggestion and might have even called it immoral. For they would have argued that while capital or education were the possession of a few, bodily labour was common to all. My suggestion to make one form of labour, *i, e.* hand-spinning the test, may be valueless, may be fantastical, but it is neither immoral nor harmful to the nation. I hold that it is a positive gain to the nation, if thousands of men and women labour for the nation, even if it is for only half an hour every day. Nor need the wearing of khaddar dress cause any hindrance to any party entering the Congress. Khaddar has been given very great importance in the Congress organisation for the past three years.

Surely, there can be no insurmountable objection on principle to the wearing of khaddar as a franchise test. Unless I am grievously mistaken, some of the best workers will find no zest in remaining in the Congress, if the wearing of khaddar and hand-spinning were not made a qualification for franchise. There are at present two parties in the Congress. One has no faith in the Council programme as a means for attaining Swaraj and is satisfied with the khaddar activity, till the country is ready for peaceful disobedience or non-co-operation. The other, while claiming to believe in the economic value of khaddar believes that, if Swaraj cannot be gained through Council entry, at the very least some steps may be taken towards it and some check might be placed upon bureaucratic extravagance. I can see my way to avoiding a quarrel with the Swarajists by letting them go their way and by securing their co-operation in the khaddar programme to the best of their ability. I would beseech the Liberals and the Independents to appreciate the fact which one man cannot alter. But this is

certainly possible. Let the Swarajists, the Liberals and the Independents confer together and, if they come to the conclusion that khaddar is a spent bullet and that it is a mere mania of mine and if they do not succeed in convincing me of my error, I shall gladly stand out. I will not come in the way of their controlling and using the national organisation for what they may consider to be the best interest of the country. I have been told by a prominent Swarajist that the khaddar programme is doomed to fail and that the Swarajists do not believe in it at all. I told him I did not share his disbelief. I told him that the Swarajists had sincerely accepted it and that they would zealously work for it. But assuming that the friend's prognostication is well founded and that the khaddar cult is a dividing factor in the public life, the sooner the country is disillusioned, the better for it. I must be permitted still to cling to it, so long as I do not lose faith in it. But I may not be allowed to stop all national activities. I therefore give my earnest assurance that I shall not wilfully stand in the way of any honourable means that may be desired by the committee for bringing all the parties together. I am deliberately putting myself under the influence of Swarajists, Liberals and Independents. I am humbly trying to learn and understand their view-point. I have no axe of my own to grind. I share their anxiety for the freedom of the country. My way is different from theirs. I would gladly go their way, if I could. Let all parties then make an honest and earnest effort to find a way out. Let them approach the deliberations of the committee with faith and determination to find a common platform. Let them approach them with an open mind.

A friend asks whether Congressmen should not postpone the alteration of the franchise, pending the result of the All Parties Committee's investigations. I respectfully submit that a well-thought-out programme cannot be lightly postponed. Three months' solid work cannot be thrown away for fear that the khaddar programme may not be accepted by the Liberals and the Independents. If, however, the Committee finds that

the khaddar programme is unworkable and really hinders real unity, the franchise can be easily amended by a special session. In my opinion, the interest of the country demands that each party should work out its own convictions, all the while allowing for possibility of error and consequent repentance and retracing.

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*27th November, 1924*

### THE NO-CHANGERS' PLIGHT

BY M. K. GANDHI

The position of No-changers is truly pathetic. The thought that I am largely if not wholly responsible for it makes me sad. My consolation—let it be their's also—is that I am probably the most confirmed No-changer of all. But what is a No-changer? It is an ugly word. It explains nothing. But it has been used to denote one, who swears by the original Non-co-operation Resolution passed at Calcutta in 1920. Its operative part is non-violence. We were non-co-operating even before 1920 in that our minds were in revolt against the Government, whilst we seemed to co-operate with it by our conduct. All this was changed in 1920. We endeavoured to establish co-operation between thought, word and deed. We discovered that such co-operation was possible only through non-violence. And we further discovered that, if we withdrew from the Government as much voluntary co-operation as was possible, it must capitulate to the people. A No-changer therefore is one who, not wishing ill to the governors but still seeking to destroy their system, renounced the privileges (so-called) of the system, viz, Councils, courts, schools, titles and tempting foreign cloth. This was its negative part. Its positive and permanent part was establishment of independent schools, voluntary arbitration and manufacture of hand-spun yarn and, from the latter of hand-woven khaddar. The Congress took the place of the Central Legislature, and solid work by volunteer workers was

itself the highest title. But the five Government institutions not having been destroyed, and the new ones not having shown any effective results, some of us lost heart and sought in the Councils a means of rendering national service. Now the No-changers, if they had truly believed in non-violence, should not have been irritated over the lack of faith on the part of their erstwhile co-workers. They should have given them the same credit for honesty and patriotism that they claimed for themselves. But they violently opposed their co-workers, who now came to be called Swarajists. If they were truly non-violent, they would have been tolerant and have honoured them for their difference and allowed them to go their way. But their intolerance was not their fault. They did not even know that they were intolerant. Instead of being self-reliant and having an unquenchable faith in their own programme, they sought strength from the Swarajists, even as we all, not wishing or being unable to overcome our weaknesses, seek strength from our rulers. That mentality of helplessness still survives, and hence the dissatisfaction with the agreement. Have the No-changers real love for the Swarajists, even though they may not be all that they claim to be and even if they may be as bad as some of us believe them to be? If they have that love, they will not worry about what the Swarajists are doing.

Again the vast majority of No-changers have no activity to absorb them the whole of their time, save khaddar. They must have a correct attitude about Hindu-Muslim relations and untouchability. But all cannot have any active work to do in regard to these items. The national schools can but absorb only a few workers and they must have special qualifications. But khaddar is an activity that can absorb all the time of all available men and women and grown up children, if they have faith. If they are truly non-violent, they must also realise that civil disobedience is an impossibility till the preliminary work of construction is done. Civil disobedience means capacity for unlimited suffering, without the intoxicating excitement of killing. That cannot

come until we have attained a certain calmness in the atmosphere, and until we have a reasonable certainty that Hindus and Mussalmans, Brahmans and Non-Brahmans, Caste-Hindus and untouchables will not quarrel and until we have understood the secret of hand-spinning and hand-weaving to the extent, by their aid, of feeling independent of public support for workers. We may be only a few such or many. If we are many, we have ensured a calm atmosphere. If we are few, we must perish in the attempt to quench the conflagration raging about us. If there are such no-changers, they cannot quarrel with the agreement. For it is but a method of finding out the number of unbending and unbendable No-changers--No-changers whose love will stand the severest test and whose faith in the triple constructive programme will, if necessary, outlast the faithlessness of the rest of India. They stand in no need of sympathy from any one. On the contrary it is I who need and ask for all the sympathy and support that they can give me. These consist in self-effacing, silent and sustained service without grumbling and without the expectation of reward, save the approbation of one's own conscience. Let the reader be sure that there are such workers. They need no introduction or advertisement through the pages of *Young India*.

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27th November, 1924

MAY GOD HELP

BY M. K. GANDHI

After much prayer, after much heart-searching, and not without fear and trembling, I have decided to accept the honour of presiding at the forthcoming Congress. I am to preside at a time when a gulf seems to be yawning between educated India and myself with some notable exceptions, and, save for a few young educated Indians of little fame, the intellect of the country seems to be ranged against my ways of thought and

action. And yet as I seem to be popular with the masses, and as many educated countrymen believe me to be as good a lover of the country as themselves, they want me to direct the Congress at this critical juncture in the history of our country.

I feel that I must not resist them. On the contrary, I must let myself be used, as I hope, for the benefit of the country. I was waiting, before coming to a final decision, for the verdict of the All India Congress Committee. At its meeting the Swarajists were eloquent by their silence. I know that many of them are not enthusiastic about the proposed alteration of the franchise. But for the sake of peace and unity, they gave their vote in silence in favour of the change. The No-changers were despondent, chafing at the surrender, as they felt it to be, of their cherished ideals. They protested, but they did not cast the vote against the agreement.

This reflects credit on both the Swarajists and the No-changers, but it is no encouraging atmosphere to work in, especially when much is expected from one. But this is just the occasion for putting my faith in Ahimsa to the test. If I have equal love in me for No-changers, Swarajists, Liberals, National Home Rulers, Independents and for that matter Englishmen, I know that it is well for me and well also for the cause.

I must not deceive the country. For me there is no politics without religion—not the religion of the superstitious and the blind religion that hates and fights, but the universal Religion of Toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided. ‘Then’ says the critic, ‘I must retire from all public activity’. Such however is not my experience. I must try to live in society and yet remain untouched by its pitfalls. Any way, for me to run away from the Congress at the present moment would be cowardice—for me not to accept the Presidentship would be to run away, especially when everybody is trying to make the path smooth for me.

I have abundant faith in my cause and humanity. Indian humanity is no worse than any other; possibly it is better.

Indeed the cause presumes faith in human nature. Dark though the path appears, God will light it and guide my steps, if I have faith in His guidance and humility enough to acknowledge my helplessness without that infallible guidance.

Though I remain a confirmed non-co-operator and civil resister, I recognise that there is no atmosphere for non-co-operation or civil disobedience on a national scale. My attempt will therefore be in the direction of bringing all parties together without distinction of race, or colour or creed on the ground of mutual toleration and thus to demonstrate if possible that the Congress non-co-operation was not conceived in or based on hate or malice. I would throw the burden on all the parties of making non-co-operation and civil disobedience impossible, not by criticism or repression, but by achieving Swaraj. I venture therefore to ask representatives of all the parties to respond to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation to attend the Congress as visitors, when they cannot attend as delegates, and give the latter the benefit of their advice.

There is a heavy duty resting on the shoulders of Congressmen, whether Swarajists or No-changers, Hindus or Mussalmans, Brahmans or Non-Brahmans. They have to show their programme on their persons and in their daily conduct. They will attend the Congress as servants and not as masters demanding service. They will show their faith in khaddar which they have been preaching for the past four years by wearing it to the exclusion of all other cloth. They will show their faith in unity between different religious sects and denominations by exercising the greatest forbearance against one another and showing respect for one another's religious observances. Hindus will show their faith in the removal of untouchability by going out of their way to be attentive to those of them who may attend the Congress.

Delegates and visitors will no doubt expect me to prescribe remedies for our many ills, for Hindu-Muslim distemper, for the Bengal repression, for the relentless prosecution of the Akalis, for the Vaikom campaign on behalf of unapproachables



and above all for the attainment of Swaraj. I have no patent remedy. The remedy is to be found with the delegates and the visitors themselves. Like the finger-post, I can but point the way, it will be for Congressmen to take or reject it. May God help us all !

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*The following notes appeared in 'Young India' of 4th December 1924.*

#### AT BELGAUM

I should like workers to know that I am to preside at the forthcoming Congress only as a businessman presides at business meetings. The demonstrative character of the Congress will be exemplified in its exhibition and other side-shows. And if we are to do any substantial business, workers must frame a programme of work beforehand. If we are to do this, all the workers should attend and give their help. This they cannot do unless they understand, appreciate and whole heartedly accept the agreement. I would not like their acceptance out of loyalty, whether they are Swarajists or No-changers. The agreement is not for show. It has been arrived at not to impress others but ourselves. Mere outward assent without inward conviction and co-operation would be worse than useless. So far I have not received any criticism from Swarajists except by way of an appeal from some for not changing the franchise. But I am besieged with angry or sorrowful protests from No-changers. I am endeavouring so far as is possible for me to explain the position and solve doubts through these pages. But I know that there is nothing in the world like a full and free chat. I was hardly able to do justice to the No-changers or myself at the hour's chat with them whilst the A. I. C. C. was sitting. I am therefore setting apart the 10th instant for a conference with No-changers at Belgaums which I hope to reach in the morning on that day. am asking Sjt.

Gangadhar Rao Deshpande to avoid demonstration and let me enter Belgaum quietly so that no time may be wasted. I request all the No-changers, who wish to take part in the discussion, to attend this informal discussion. At the same time I would warn them against flooding Belgaum so early. The Congress sessions will not begin before the 26th instant. The Khilafat Conference does not begin before the 24th instant. The National Convention cannot be much earlier. I therefore suggested that the No-changers in each Province should select two or three as their spokesmen and representatives who should be fully armed with the views of the rest. The whole of the afternoon of the 20th can be given to interchange of views and there may be further discussion on the 21st if need be. I am corresponding with Deshabandhu Das and Pandit Motilalji Nehru to ask whether they would like me to have a similar discussion with the Swarajists. I would then gladly give a part of the 21st solely to them. So far as the attendance of delegates is concerned, I do hope that there will be full attendance on the part of both the parties. For though so far as I am concerned I wish to carry no proposition of importance by party voting, I am anxious to know the mind of the delegates. It would not be a proper discharge of their trust, if they stay away out of apathy, indifference or disgust. No one should offer himself as a delegate who does not wish to devote his time and attention to national work. Every delegate is therefore in duty bound to attend, if it is humanly possible, and help to shape the Congress policy for the coming year.

### BREACH OF FAITH?

It is a healthy sign of the times that there are people in the country who are jealous of the morals of the nation. A friend, not himself a Liberal, asks, 'Was not the ratification of the agreement between the Swarajists and Gandhiji by the A. I. C. C. a breach of faith with the All Parties Conference?' The answer, in my humble opinion, is an emphatic 'No.' The agreement is the basis of invitation. The two wings of the Congress

must first unite. In the absence of the Congress, that unity can be expressed by the A. I. C. C. The agreement is final so far as the two wings of the Congress are concerned. But it is open to attack and even to revision at the instance of any outside party. The attack can succeed only if it appeals to the reason of both the wings. No party is called upon to surrender its principle for the sake of unity. The agreement now ratified by the A. I. C. C. is not an ultimatum,—either this or nothing. There are many things outside the agreement which all the parties have to consider. Congressmen are not expected to suspend their principles or policy pending decision of the All Parties Conference. But they are expected to keep an open mind on everything. They must approach the question with a receptive mind. Subject to that one essential condition, it is better that all parties declare their principles, policies and intentions. There should be no mental reservations. Not to proceed with the ratification of the agreement would have meant a mental reservation. What we must aim at is the same spirit of toleration that we need and are striving after in the relations between Hindus and Mussalmans. We want to unite and respect one another in spite of the sharpest differences of opinion, that is to say, if we have a common goal to pursue. We may find to our great grief that there is no common goal, that Swaraj does not mean the same thing in any of its aspects to all parties, that our interests are not the same. Then I admit there is no uniting of all parties on the Congress platform. But that would be the same thing as saying that there is no Swaraj for poor India. For after all when Swaraj comes, different parties will work in the same Swaraj Parliament. The Congress is intended to be a forerunner and prototype of such a Parliament.

#### AN IMPORTANT OMISSION

Pandit Motilalji says that an important reference in my speech at the recent A. I. C. C. meeting about the propriety of an appeal by the Swaraj Party for support has been omitted in

the reports published in the press. It was undoubtedly important and I wanted it to be reported. I therefore gladly give below the purport :

“The Swarajists have a perfect right to strengthen and organise themselves and to appeal for support to the country, not excluding the No-changers. If non-co-operation is suspended, and the Swaraj Party has the same status as the No-changers in the Congress, the latter may not object to such propaganda. Indeed it would be improper to do so. Such in my opinion is the undoubted implication of the suspension of non-co-operation. This does not mean that whole-hoggers should join the Swaraj Party. As Deshabandu had a perfect right to do, he invited me to join the party. I told him I could not, so long as I had no faith in council entry. I could only help from outside. Nor could any other true No-changer join. But those who have no such scruples and remain out, only because the Congress programme stands, may certainly join the Swaraj Party without any interference from No-changers. The latter's propaganda against councils cannot be vocal; their ceaseless work on the charkha must speak for itself. The Swarajists have both the councils and the charkha. No-changers have nothing but the charkha to swear by.”

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*4th December, 1934*

## NOT EVEN HALF-MAST

BY M. K. GANDHI

The perplexity of No-changers continues unabated. Some of the best among them, those whose advice and co-operation I value above everything else, are bewildered. They feel that I have probably given up even lifelong principles for a patch-work. One such communication I quote below :—

“You are reported to have said that not having the power to give battle to the Swarajists immediately, you are forbearing, marking time. But why thus? The cause o

truth and non-violence demands that you keep the flag flying for us collectively outside the Swaraj Party and the Congress, in no spirit of hostility to anybody, even as Muhammad did. His followers dwindled to three depending upon the holy God's strength. Personally you undoubtedly gain by surrendering and helping opponents, but the cause suffers irretrievably when non-co-operators are neither asked nor allowed to hoist the flag collectively. No spiritually minded man can take interest in politics which neither promotes nor draws sustenance from truth and non-violence. No strategic unity will attract God, because fight with the Government then becomes immoral. Further, under the Swarajists regime there will be nothing to purify the criminal tendencies of impatient idealists as under your previous regime of high moral idealism and spiritual endeavour. Now utter futility and blank despair will stare them in the face."

The friend represents a large body of non-co-operators. He himself was attracted to the struggle because of its spiritual nature. I have therefore carefully read the message more than once. My hope is that he has formed judgment on garbled, even misleading, reports of my speeches. He was not present at the Conference. He was not in Bombay. It is most difficult to follow any movement merely from newspaper reports. I have not seen the report to which the friend makes reference. The expression 'giving battle to the Swarajists', torn from its context, may bear a meaning opposite to the one intended by me. Let me explain. I cannot give battle to the Swarajists, if they misunderstand me, if No-changers do not understand the spirit in which a battle of non-violence conceived in a humble spirit can be offered, if the Government takes of such a battle advantage not contemplated by me, or if the atmosphere required for it is wanting. What happened in fact is that all these things have more or less come about. Let it be further remembered that with me the safety of the cause has not lain in numbers. My so-called popularity has been perhaps

the greatest stumbling block in the swift execution of my plans. I should not have done penance either for the Bombay riots or Chauri Chaura if the people who took part in them had been utter strangers to me and made no profession of non-violence. So long therefore as I continue to attract crowds, I live to walk warily. A general with a large army cannot march as swiftly as he would like to. He has to take note of all the different units in his army. My position is not very unlike such a general's. It is not a happy position, but it is there. If it often means strength, it sometimes means a positive hindrance. It is perhaps now clear what I mean by 'not having the power to give battle to the Swarajists.'

I have in no way 'lowered the flag' of non-co-operation. It is not even brought half-mast. For not a single non-co-operator is called upon to deny his faith. It is always risky to bring in the illustrations of the great prophets or religious teachers of the world. I am in the world feeling my way to light 'amid the encircling gloom.' I often err and miscalculate. But since the great Prophet's name has been mentioned in this connection, I may in all humility say that I am not without hope that I shall not be found wanting if I am left with but two human comrades or without any. My trust is solely in God. And I trust men only because I trust God. If I had no God to rely upon, I should be like Timon a hater of my species. But if we are to draw a moral from the lives of the great teachers, let us also remember that the Prophet entered into treaty with those with whom he had little in common and who are described in scathing terms in the Koran. Non-co-operation, exodus, resistance and even violence were with the Prophet phases in the same battle of life wherein truth was everything.

I do not believe as the friend seems to do that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. I do not

help opponents without at the same time helping myself and my co-workers. I have not asked or advised believing non-co-operators not to 'hoist their flag' either collectively or individually. On the contrary I expect them to keep it flying top-mast against all odds. But that does not mean that the nation or the Congress non-co-operates. What we must recognise, if we will not ignore facts, is that the nation, *i. e.*, the Congress in so far as it represents the nation, is not carrying out the programme of non-co-operation. It must therefore be confined to individuals. Non-co-operating ex-lawyers, ex-title-holders, ex-school-masters, ex-councillors may remain that to the full and still belong to the Congress. Their special programme is hand-spinning and Khadi. These the Congress has not yet rejected. The Swarajists are gracefully accommodating No-changers in this respect to the fullest extent compatible with their convictions. They do not consider as No-changers do, that universalising hand-spinning is necessary for accelerating the exclusion of foreign cloth. And yet in order to retain the co-operation of No-changers, if you will, my co-operation, they, seeing that they have no objection on principle to hand-spinning, have become party to its introduction in the franchise. It is well to bear in mind that the introduction of hand-spinning as part of the franchise is an extraordinary proposal. A conscientious man like Mr. Stokes opposes it tooth and nail, although he is himself an enthusiastic spinner. Many of our distinguished countrymen laugh at it. It is no small thing then that the Swarajists have accepted. Therefore if they prove true to their word (and I have no reason to doubt it), non-co-operators do not need any separate organisation. The No-changers need not, ought not, to take part in the council activity and therefore the Swarajists have the sole authority and consequently sole responsibility for the council programme. They will use the name of the Congress as of right but they will not therefore use the name of the No-changers. The Congress is a joint concern in which the liability and responsibility for certain items are joint and for particular activity given to and taken over by a section..

If unity, removal of untouchability and the charkha are an integral part of the politics of this country, then No-changers have all the truth, all the non-violence and all the spirituality that they may wish for. A No-changer's fight with the Government consists chiefly in purifying himself and developing his own strength. But he must not by any act of his impair the power of the Swarajists whom he is bound to regard as honest as himself. A No-changer should be the last person to arrogate sanctity for himself to the exclusion of others. And granting that the Swarajist system is bad, let him not act as if the existing system of Government is not much worse. Even a believer in non-violence has to say between two combatants which is less bad or whose cause is just. Between Japan and Russia, Tolstoy gave his verdict for Japan. Between England and Dutch South Africa, W. T. Stead sided with the Boers and prayed for England's defeat. Between Swarajists and the Government, I do not take a single second to make my choice. There is danger of our vision being blurred because of the Swarajist revolt against the programme of 1920. Assume for the moment that the Swarajists are as bad as the Government would have us believe, even so their government will be infinitely preferable to a government which has limitless resources for crushing the slightest attempt at independence of conduct or real resistance. I am not aiming at any 'strategic' unity. I am simply aiming at representation of all parties in the Congress, so that we may learn to tolerate one another's opinions, we may know one another better, we may react upon one another and, if we cannot find a common method of execution, we may at least frame a common scheme of Swaraj.

I agree with the friend in his concluding remarks that it is not the council programme that will ultimately keep the impatient idealist from mischief, but it is the non-violent non-co-operation which evokes the highest spirit of self-sacrifice that will wean him from the error of his ways. I promise that I have done nothing to weaken the strong non-co-operator. With myself, I have put him on his mettle. Let him sacrifice



himself to the utmost on the altar of unadulterated love and the whole Congress will follow him like one man. But such love acts in an unseen manner. The more efficient a force is, the more silent and the more subtle it is. Love is the subtlest force in the world. If the No-changer has it in him, it is well with him and every one else.

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*26th December, 1924*

### CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Friends,

It was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me today. The unique honour for this year should have been bestowed upon Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, who did such wonderful work both in Kenya and South Africa. But it was not to be. The developments both internal and external have necessitated my acceptance of the burden. I know that I shall have your support in my attempt to do justice to the high office to which you have called me.

At the outset, let me note with respectful feelings the deaths during the year of Bi Amman, Sir Asutosh Mukherji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramaniam Iyer and Mr. Dal Bahadur Giri at home, and of Messrs. Rustomjee and P. K. Naidu in South Africa. I tender in your name my respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

#### *Retrospective*

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally an institution for developing strength from within. It has ceased to function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government for redress of grievances. It did so, because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of government. The breach of faith with the Mussalmans of India was the first rude shock to the people's faith in the

Government. The Rowlatt Act and O'Dwyerism culminating in the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, opened the eyes of the people to the true nature of the system. At the same time it was realised that the existence of the system depended upon the co-operation whether conscious or unconconscious, and whether voluntary or forced, of the people. With the view therefore of mending or ending the system it was decided to try to begin withdrawing voluntary co-operation from the top. At the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920 the boycott of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, legislative bodies and foreign cloth was resolved upon. All the boycotts were more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-co-operation movement. Though not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institution boycotted.

The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. Whilst it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was soon discovered that the non-violence was only skin-deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of intolerance against those who did not non-co-operate. This was violence of a subtler type. In spite, however, of this grave defect I make bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have broken out, had not non-violent non-co-operation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-co-operation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though, therefore, non-violent non-co-operation has not brought us Swaraj, though it has brought certain deplorable re

sults and though the institutions that were sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-violent non-co-operation as a means of attaining political freedom has come to stay and that even its partial success has brought us nearer Swaraj. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

### *A Halt*

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt. For whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-co-operation, the majority of those who are immediately concerned have practically lost faith in it, with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up Councils have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up Government schools and colleges have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear that Government schools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission. In these circumstances these boycotts cannot be worked as part of the National programme, unless the Congress is prepared to do without the classes directly affected. But I hold it to be just as impracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-co-operators out. They must both remain in the Congress, without either party interfering with or hostilely criticising the other. What is applicable to Hindu Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to the unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-co-operation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in.

You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.

### *Foreign Cloth Boycott*

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word 'Boycott' has been changed in the agreement into 'refusal to use foreign cloth.' There is no doubt a bad odour about the word 'Boycott.' It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned. I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasises the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as personal abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness etc. are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill-will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from good-will and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that has ruined the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. The plan therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to-

refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, i.e. khaddar not only saves the peasant's money, but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organisation of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organisation. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If therefore this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain and, as Britain is today the predominant world power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is wrong and immoral for a nation to supply, for instance, intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufacture in the country to which foreign grain or cloth are exported results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and

often more so because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

### *Britain's Duty*

It is then I hold the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to regulate her imports with due regard to her own welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

### *Foreign v. British*

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth, and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about anyhow of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least

of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence.

### *Objections Considered*

But, say the critics, the spinning wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the middle ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic march of scientific knowledge for which machinery stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is that we have not given the spinning wheel enough trial. I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All-India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of resolutions on hand-spinning which they themselves have passed from time to time. The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances, it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning wheels. They are managed by men. It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the future will always have to keep some men at the spinning wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which as a cottage industry it must have. I must inform you that the progress the mechanism of the wheel has made would have been impossible, if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

### *Machinery*

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in

non-violence. The spinning wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in 'reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad.

### *Spinning Franchise*

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured to present it for introduction in the franchise, and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the Swaraj Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am however thankful for what the Swaraj Party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

### *No other Message*

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of Swaraj if it is to be by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. As I have already remarked it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by Civil Disobedience. But Civil Disobedience for the attainment of Swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let



it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say 'No'. Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards Swaraj.

### *Hindu-Muslim Unity*

Hindu Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for Swaraj is almost universally accepted. I say 'almost' because I know some Hindus and some Mussalmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Mussalman India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation in which Hindus made common cause with their Mussalman brethren and the non-co-operation that followed it caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task even if I was minded for it. Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussalman majority. They have in so far as is possible under

a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority, as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government and would resolutely decline to go back till the Mussalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a Swaraj Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign, in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no Swaraj Government with any pretension to being a popular Government can possibly be organised and maintained on a war footing. A Swaraj Government means a Government established by the free joint-will of Hindus, Mussalmans and others. Hindus and Mussalmans, if they desire Swaraj, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All Parties' Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal,

at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preference become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

### *Untouchability*

Untouchability is another hindrance to Swaraj. Its removal is just as essential for Swaraj, as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take Swaraj till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed classes. They have sunk with the latter's suppression. Historians tell us that the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindusthan precisely as the English invaders treat us, if not much worse. If so, our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class. The sooner we remove the blot, the better it is for us Hindus. But the priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God set apart any portion of humanity as untouchable. And Hindus who are Congressmen have to see to it that they break down the barrier at the earliest possible moment. The Vaikom Satyagrahis are showing us the way. They are carrying on their battle with gentleness and firmness. They have patience, courage and faith. Any movement in which these qualities are exhibited becomes irresistible.

I would however warn the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees nowadays of exploiting the suppressed classes for political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the un-

touchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us 'superior' Hindus to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our downtrodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression. Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. That religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is Light, not darkness. God is love, not hate. God is Truth, not untruth. God alone is great. We His creatures are but dust. Let us be humble and recognise the place of the lowliest of His creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else. Love is the root of sacrifice and this perishable body is the root of self or irreligion, says Tulsidas. Whether we win Swaraj or not, the Hindus have to purify themselves before they can hope to revive the Vedic philosophy and make it a living reality.

### *Swaraj Scheme*

But the spinning wheel, Hindu Muslim unity and removal of untouchability are only means to an end. The end we do not know. For me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life. But I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagavan Das that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of Swaraj, i. e. the scheme of Swaraj which all India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All Parties' Conference is charged with that mission and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points?

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work, such for example, as suggested for the Congress Franchise. Literary or property

test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the government and the well-being of the State.

2. The ruinous military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.

3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decisions of the Panchayats to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbrous and worn out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.

4. Revenues from intoxicating liquors and drugs should be abolished.

5. Salaries of the Civil and Military Service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.

6. There should be re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy as possible for every province for its internal administration and growth.

7. Appointment of a commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.

8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these States who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in Self-governing India.

9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.

10. The highest post to be open to all who may be otherwise fit. Examinations for the Civil and Military Services to be in India.

11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislatures and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, to be Hindustani; the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and of the Central Legislature to be also Hindustani. The language of international diplomacy to be English.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of Swaraj as I would have it. We may not have the power today to take or receive or do things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a Swaraj scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

### *Independence*

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstance complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of

separation on the British people. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

### *The Swaraj Party*

So far, then, I have considered the contents of the agreement and the general questions arising from it. Not much need be said about the status of equality given to the Swaraj Party. I wish I could have avoided it, not because the Party is not worthy, but because I do not share its views about Council entry. But if I must remain in the Congress and even lead it, I must recognise facts as they are. It was easy enough for me to go out of the Congress or to decline the honour of presiding. But it was not, so I thought and still think, in the interest of the country for me to take that step. The Swaraj Party represents, if not a majority, at least a strong and growing minority in the Congress. If I was not to divide the Congress on the issue of its status, I was bound to agree to its conditions so long as they were not in conflict with my conscience. They are not in my opinion unreasonable. The Swarajists want to use the name of the Congress for their policy.

A formula had to be found for their doing so without their pledging or binding the No-changers to their policy. One of the ways of doing it was to give it the authority and the responsibility both financial and executive with regard to the framing and the prosecution of their policy. The Congress as a whole could not guide that policy without sharing the responsibility. And as I could not take the responsibility, and as I apprehend no No-changer can, I could not be party to shaping the policy, nor could I shape it without my heart in it. And heart can only go where belief is. I know that the sole authority to the Swaraj Party to use the name of the Congress in regard to the Council programme makes somewhat awkward the position of the other parties wishing to join the Congress. But I fear it is inevitable. The Swaraj Party cannot be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all it wants the advantage not for itself but for the service of the country. All parties have or can have that ambition or no other. I hope therefore that the others will join the Congress and work from within to affect the course of the country's politics. Dr. Besant has led the way in that direction. I know that she would have many things done otherwise, but she is content to come in hoping to bring round the electorate to her view by working within the Congress. The No-changers can, in my humble opinion, vote for the agreement with a clear conscience. The only national programme jointly to be worked by all the parties is khaddar, Hindu Muslim unity and, for the Hindus removal of untouchability. Is not this after all what they want?

### *Purely Social Reform*

It has been suggested that this programme turns the Congress into a purely social reform organisation. I beg to differ from that view. Everything that is absolutely essential for Swaraj is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress. It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only. But



it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction, or as I have otherwise described it, the work of internal growth.

Nor does the agreement exhaust the list of constructive items that the Congress must handle. Those I am about to mention are of the highest importance, but they, being non-contentions and not absolutely essential for Swaraj as the foregoing three items, find no mention in the agreement.

### *National School*

One such is the maintenance of national educational institutions. Probably the public do not know that next to khaddar the running of national educational institutions has been the most successful. These cannot be given up so long as even a few pupils are left. It must be a point of honour with the respective provinces to keep up their colleges and schools. Suspension of non-co-operation should not have any injurious effect on these institutions. On the contrary, greater effort than ever before should be made to maintain and strengthen them. Most provinces have their national schools and colleges. Gujarat alone has a national university maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000, and having control of 3 Colleges and 70 Schools with 9,000 pupils. It has acquired its own ground at Ahmedabad and has already spent Rs. 2,05,323, in buildings. Throughout the country, finest and silent work has been done by the non-co-operating students. Theirs is a great and noble sacrifice. From a worldly stand-point they have perhaps lost the prospect of brilliant careers. I suggest to them however that from the national stand-point they have gained more than they have lost. They left their schools or colleges, because it was through them that the youth of the nation were insulted and humiliated in the Punjab. The first link in the chain of our bondage is forged in these institutions. The corresponding national institutions, however inefficiently managed they may be, are the factories where the first instruments of our freedom are forged. After all, the hope of the future centres round the boys and

girls studying in these national institutions. I therefore regard the upkeep of these institutions as a first charge on provincial funds. But these institutions to be truly national must be clubs for promoting real Hindu Muslim unity, they must be also nurseries for training Hindu boys and girls to regard untouchability as a blot upon Hinduism and a crime against humanity. They should be training schools for expert spinners and weavers. If the Congress retains its belief in the potency of the spinning wheel and khaddar, one has a right to expect these institutions to supply the science of the spinning wheel. They should be also factories for khaddar production. This is not to say that the boys and the girls are not to have any literary training. But I do maintain that the training of the hand and the heart must go hand-in-hand with that of the head. The quality and the usefulness of a national school or college will be measured not by the brilliance of the literary attainments of its scholars but by the strength of the national character, and deftness in handling the carding bow, the spinning wheel and the loom. Whilst I am most anxious that no national school or college should be closed, I should have not the slightest hesitation in closing down a school or college, that is indifferent to the admission of non-Hindu boys, that shuts its door against the entry of untouchables or that has not carding and spinning as an indispensable part of the training. The time is past when we can be satisfied with the word 'national' on the sign-board of the school and the knowledge that it is not affiliated to any Government university or is not otherwise controlled by the Government. I must also not omit to point out that the tendency in many national institutions still is to neglect the vernaculars and Hindustani. Many teachers have not realised the necessity of imparting instruction through the vernaculars or Hindustani. I rejoice to observe that Sjt. Gangadhar Rao has arranged a meeting of national educationists to exchange experiences on the several points mentioned by me and to evolve, if possible, a general plan of education and action.

*Unemployed Non-co-operators*

This is perhaps the proper place to mention those lawyers who have given up practice, and school masters and other Government employees who have given up Government service at the call of the nation. I know that there are many such men who find it hard to make the two ends meet. They deserve national support. The Khadi Board and the national schools and colleges are the two services that can take in almost an unlimited number of honest and industrious men who are willing to learn and labour and are satisfied with a modest allowance. I observe a tendency not to accept any remuneration for national service. The desire to serve without remuneration is praiseworthy, but all cannot satisfy it. Every labourer is worthy of his hire. No country can produce thousands of unpaid wholetime workers. We must therefore develop an atmosphere in which a patriot would consider it an honour to serve the country and accept an allowance for such service.

*Intoxicants*

Another item of national importance is the liquor and the opium traffic. Had the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance remained non-violent, we would today have witnessed a progressive improvement. But unfortunately our picketing degenerated into violence veiled when it was not open. Picketing had, therefore, to be abandoned, and the liquor-shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But you will be pleased to hear that the temperance work has not died out altogether. Many workers are still continuing their quiet and self-less service in the cause of temperance. We must, however, realise that we would not be able to eradicate the evil till we have Swaraj. It is no matter of pride to us that our children are being educated out of the revenue derived from this immoral source. I would almost forgive the Council entry by Congressmen, if they would boldly sweep out this revenue even though education may have to be

starved. Nothing of the kind should happen if they will insist on a corresponding reduction in the military expenditure.

### *Bengal Repression*

You will observe that in the foregoing paragraphs I have confined myself to the internal developments.

But the external circumstances, and among them chiefly the acts of our rulers, are affecting our destiny no less surely (though it may be adversely) than the internal development. We may turn them to advantage if we will or we may succumb to them to our disadvantage. The latest act of the rulers is the repression commenced in Bengal. The All Parties' Conference condemned it in no uncertain terms. The Conference had hesitation in saying that the blow was aimed at the Bengal Swaraj Party. But I have none. I have been to Calcutta and had the opportunity of meeting men representing a variety of opinion and I came to the conclusion that the blow was aimed at the Swaraj Party. The opinion is confirmed by the speeches since delivered by Lords Lytton and Reading. The defence they have offered is wholly unconvincing. Such a defence is possible only in a place like India where public opinion counts for little or nothing. Lord Lytton's conditions of release are an insult to our intelligence. Their Excellencies beg the question when they tell us that the situation warranted the Ordinance and the action under the Regulation of 1818. The national contention is

1. That the situation they describe has not been proved to exist;
2. That assuming that the situation does exist, the remedy is worse than the disease;
3. That the ordinary law contains enough powers for dealing with the situation; and lastly
4. That even if extraordinary powers were necessary they should have been taken from the legislature which is of their own creation.

The speeches of their Excellencies evade these issues.

altogether. The nation which has had considerable experience of unsupported statements of the Government will not accept them as gospel truth. Their Excellencies know that we cannot and will not believe their statements not because they are wilfully untruthful, but because the sources of their information have often been discovered to be tainted. Their assurances are therefore a mockery of the people. The speeches are almost a challenge to us to do our worst. But we must not be irritated or be impatient. Repression, if it does not cow us down, if it does not deter us from our purpose, can but hasten the advent of Swaraj; for it puts us on our mettle and evokes the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of danger. Repression does for a true man or a nation what fire does for gold. In 1921 we answered repression with Civil Disobedience and invited the Government to do its worst. But today we are obliged to eat the humble pie. We are not ready for Civil Disobedience. We can but prepare for it. Preparation for Civil Disobedience means discipline, self-restraint, a non-violent but resisting spirit, cohesion and above all scrupulous and willing obedience to the known laws of God and such laws of man as are in furtherance of God's laws. But unfortunately we have neither discipline nor self-restraint enough for our purpose, we are either violent or our non-violence is unresisting, we have not enough cohesion and the laws that we obey, whether of God or man, we obey compulsorily. As between Hindus and Mussalmans we witness a daily defiant breach of laws both of God and man. This is no atmosphere for Civil Disobedience—the one matchless and invincible weapon at the disposal of the oppressed. The alternative is undoubtedly violence. We seem to have the atmosphere for it. Hindu-Muslim fights are our training for it. And those who believe that India's deliverance lies through violence are entitled to gloat over the free fights that take place between us. But I say to those who believe in the cult of violence; 'You are retarding India's progress.' If you have any pity or friendly feeling for the starving millions, know that your violence will do them no service. Those whom you

seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organised than you are. You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countryman who have no desire to die a martyr's death. You know that this Government believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence. Whatever may be true of other countries, there is no chance of the cult of violence flourishing in this country. India is admittedly the best repository and exponent of non-violence. Will you not better devote your lives, if you sacrifice them in the cause of non-violence ?

I know, however, that my appeal to the violent revolutionaries will be just as fruitless as any such appeal to the violent and anarchical Government is likely to be.

We must therefore find the remedy and demonstrate to both the violent Government and the violent revolutionaries that there is a force that is more effective than their violence.

### *Repression a Symptom*

I regard this repression as a chronic symptom of a chronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as White vs. Black. Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the 'white man's burden.' In the Malaya peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would today drive out every Indian if it safely could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless; they are unwilling or not so insistent as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers. The Government of India have not shown even the decency to publish the report of its own Commission on Fiji.

The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have poured their blood

like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt no one else. Nankana Saheb, Guruka-Bagh, and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

One hears that repression is crushing the Burmese spirit.

Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer ;—certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable crime, but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it?

The repression in Bengal is therefore not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other or in some province or other, as our normal condition till we come to our own.

### *Need for Sanction*

The Congress, therefore, to be worthy of its trust must devise a sanction to back its demands. Before we can forge the sanction, we Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis etc., must unite and so should Swarajists, No-changers, Liberals, Home-Rulers, Muslim Leaguers and others. If we can but speak with a united voice and know our own mind, it would be well. If we can develop the power to keep foreign cloth from our land, it would be better. We are ready then for the sanction.

### *My Faith*

Let me state my faith; as a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-co-operation for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot—will not—do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely a policy with me, it is an

article of faith. Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called Satyagraha. It is my *Kulpadaru* — my *Jam-i-Jam* — the Universal provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth ; and god is Truth. Ahimsa or Non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj for me is part of that Truth. This Satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda, or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the contrary I believe that India will come to her own in the near future, and that only through Satyagraha. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-co-operation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that Satyagraha never fails and that one perfect Satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect Satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in everyone of us. Like Swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it.

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*26th December, 1924*

ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN

BY M. K. GANDHI

On the eve of the coming session of the Congress many thoughts come to me. It is the early morn of my day of silence, just four days before the meeting of the Congress. The eternal duel between Ormuzd and Ahriman—God and Satan—is raging in my breast, which is one among their million battle-fields. I have had two very precious days with the 'No-changers.' Sarojini Devi says 'No-changer' is a bad word. I have agreed and thrown the burden on her poetic shoulders of giving the public a sweeter word. One voice in me tells me, "All will be well if you will be 'careful for nothing' but merely do your duty as you find it." Another says, "You are a fool. You must not believe the Swarajists, nor must you trust the No-changers. The Swarajists do not mean what they say. The No-changers will leave you in the lurch at the critical moment. Between the two your spinning wheel will be smashed to atoms. You will therefore do well to listen to me and retire." I am going to obey the first voice. What though the Swarajists are found to deceive me and the No-changers to desert me? They will lose, not I. But if I listen to the word of Mr. Worldly-wise, I am lost already. I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following. I must therefore believe the Swarajists, as I would myself be believed by them. I dare not impute weakness to the No-changers, because I would not like them to think that I was weak. I must therefore believe in the honour of the Swarajists and the strength of the No-changers. It is true that I have often been let down. Many have deceived me and many have been found wanting. But I do not repent of my association with them. For I knew how to non-co-operate, as I knew how to co-operate. The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to

take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary.

My difficulty therefore is not whom to trust or not to trust. My difficulty lies in the fact that there are hardly half a dozen No-changers who are entirely or on the whole satisfied with the agreement. They have sincere doubts. I sympathise with them and yet I feel that I am doing the right thing in holding to the agreement. They would leave me if they could, but they cannot. The tie seems to be indissoluble. They want to trust my judgment in spite of themselves. This is a truly embarrassing position. It increases my responsibility a hundredfold. I assure them that I will not consciously betray their trust. I shall do nothing that will damage the country's cause or honour. But the greatest consolation I can give them is by pointing out that all would be well if they will be true to themselves. Every one of them will have done his or her primary duty, if he or she practises Hindu-Muslim unity, and if he or she devotes all his other spare time to carding and spinning and mastering the science of khaddar, and himself or herself wears it, and, if a Hindu loves his or her untouchable brother as himself or herself. This much every one of us can do without any assistance. Practice is the best speech and the best propaganda. And this every one can do without let or hindrance from anybody else. Not to worry about others is Ormuzd's way. Ahriman leads us into the trap by taking us away from ourselves. God is not in Kaaba or in Kashi. He is within everyone of us. Therefore Swaraj too is to be found by searching inward, not by vainly expecting others, even our fellow-workers, to secure it for us.

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*The following notes by M. K. Gandhi appeared in 'Young India' of 26th December, 1924.*

## TWO ADDRESSES

The Belgaum District Board and the Belgaum Municipality did me the honour of presenting me addresses which recounted my virtues. I felt that any recital of my virtues as an All-India worker was beside the point. A Municipal address may be fittingly given only to a person for Municipal virtues. But in the special circumstances in which we are placed, the Municipalities which are struggling to be free give expression to their freedom by somewhat identifying themselves with public workers, whether they possess Municipal merit or not. It is only from that point of view that the presentation of the Municipal address to public workers may be justified. But the presentation of these addresses gave me an opportunity of paying a tribute to a Western effort in the midst of my opposition to western civilisation in general. The one thing which we can and must learn from the West is the science of Municipal sanitation. By instinct and habit we are used to village life, where the need for corporate sanitation is not much felt. But as the Western civilisation is materialistic and therefore tends towards the development of the cities to the neglect of villages the people of the West have evolved a science of corporate sanitation and hygiene from which we have much to learn. Our narrow and tortuous lanes, our congested ill-ventilated houses, our criminal neglect of sources of drinking water require remedying. Every Municipality can render the greatest service by insisting on people observing the laws of sanitation. It is a superstition to consider that vast sums of money are required for effecting sanitary reform. We must modify western methods of sanitation to suit our requirements. And as my patriotism is inclusive and admits of no enmity or ill-will, I do not hesitate, in spite of my horror of Western materialism to take from the West what is beneficial

for me. And as I know Englishmen to be resourceful, I greatly seek their assistance in such matters. For instance, I owe to Poore my knowledge of the cheapest and the most effective method of disposal of human excreta. He has shown how by our ignorance or prejudice we waste this precious manure. Excreta are not dirt in their proper place and when they are properly handled. Dirt, as the English say, is 'matter misplaced.'

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TYPICAL

I give below Babu Hardayal Nag's letter :

"Dear Mahatmaji.

I owe you an explanation for not attending the Belgaum Congress, particularly the informal conference to be held at Belgaum on the 20th. My 'horror for conferences' prevents me from attending the conference. I feel that they have in their present form almost outgrown their usefulness.' I cannot persuade myself to leave my engagement in the work of khaddar production, humble though it is, for merely a 'heart to heart' talk at Belgaum. I am not attending the Belgaum Congress for the following reasons:

(1) I am not in a mood at present to vote against you and as a matter of fact you attach no importance to any voting at Belgaum.

(2) I understand that the Calcutta pact is irrevocable.

(3) I cannot persuade myself to be a party to the suspension of non-co-operation. I do not believe that non-co-operation requires suspension, except for killing the orthodox non-co-operators.

(4) I hold some strong views about Hindu-Muslim unity which are not in a line with the views of many of the Congress leaders.

(5) You are strong enough to associate with wickedness for the purpose of conquering it with love, but other non-co-operators by such association are liable to extinction. I believe

I am saving myself from extinction as a non-co-operator by not attending the Belgaum Congress.

(6) I have very strong feelings in favour of majority rule and there are many who share those feelings. I understand no such rule will be observed in conducting business at Belgaum.

(7) The last but not the least ground is that I think my 'money and time' can be better utilized in helping 'khaddar production in my own locality than by attending the conference and Congress at Belgaum. The Congress organisations in Bengal being in the hands of the Swarajists are scarcely rendering any help to the spinning and weaving propaganda. I understand most of the contributors, if not all, of quotas of yarn to the All India Khaddar Board from Bengal according to the Ahmedabad resolution are non-co-operators and their friends and sympathisers.

In conclusion, I feel bound to request you for a visit to Bengal in January next and have a heart talk with the orthodox non-co-operators in a certain central place and then visit as many localities as you possibly can. That will materially help their constructive work, specially national education which is now in a moribund condition. I earnestly and fervently hope you will pardon me even if the above grounds do not afford sufficient excuse for not going to Belgaum."

Babu Hardayal Nag is a veteran non-co-operator. His attitude is typical of that of many No-changers. Holding the views he does, I cannot but endorse his decision to abstain from attendance at Belgaum. Indeed I appreciate this resentment against even suspension of non-co-operation. I wish there was more of it. I am not advising national suspension for the love of it. Circumstances have compelled me to do so. It is for individuals to make it national again if necessary by demonstrating its efficacy in their own persons and remaining non-violent at the same time. I would ask Babu Hardayal and those who think like him to be most careful about accusing opponents of wickedness. 'Judge not lest ye be judged' is a golden rule. Those whom we regard as wicked as a rule return the compliment and

in their turn accuse us of what we charge them with. But here again I quite grant the proposition that if one regards another as irrevocably wicked, one is bound ordinarily to non-co-operate with him, for unfortunately many things are regulated purely by one's mental condition. If I mistake a rope for a snake, I am likely to turn pale with fright, much to the amusement of the bystander who knows that it is but a rope. Mind is its own place, it can make hell of heaven. So far as the complaint against Congress organisation in Bengal is concerned, whatever may be the position today, if hand-spinning becomes part of the franchise, no Congress organisation can exist that does not encourage and organise hand-spinning.

So far as my visit to Bengal is concerned, I would come to tour through the different districts at the earliest opportunity. But it is difficult to fix the time. Kohat refugees are a first charge on my time after 23rd January. And every day till 23rd January is already mortgaged. It is risky to say where fate would lead me after the Punjab work is over.

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*1st January, 1925*

## BELGAUM IMPRESSIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

When there are too many impressions all clamouring for expression, the registrar's task becomes unenviable. Such is my position as I take up the pencil to register my impressions of Belgaum. I can but try.

Gangadhar Rao Deshpande and his band of workers rose to the highest height. His Vijayanagar was a triumph—not yet of Swaraj—but certainly of organisation. Every detail was well thought out. Dr. Hardikar's volunteers were smart and attentive. The roads were broad and well kept. They could easily be broader for the convenience of the temporary shops and the easy movement of thousands of sight-seers. The lighting arrangement was perfect. The huge pavilion with a marble fountain in front of it seemed to invite all who would enter it.

The capacity of the pavilion could not be less than seventeen thousands. The sanitary arrangements though quite good needed still more scientific treatment than what they had. The method of the disposal of used water was very primitive. I invite the Cawnpore people who are to have the honour of holding the Congress session of 1925 to study the most effective methods of camp sanitation now and not leave this very important part to the eleventh hour.

Whilst I am able to give ungrudging praise for the almost perfect organisation that one could see in the Congress camp, I cannot help remarking that Gangadhar Rao could not escape the temptation of making the outside look lavish and in following the traditional custom of going in for extravagant luxuries for the 'people at the top.' Take the presidential 'hut'. I had bargained for a khaddar hut; but I was insulted with a khaddar palace. The floor space reserved for the President was certainly quite necessary. The fence round the 'palace' was an absolute necessity for my protection from embarrassingly admiring crowds. But I am sure that, had I been contractor, I would have given the same space and the same comfort to the President at half the expense. This, however, is only one instance of the many I can quote of lavish expenditure. The refreshments supplied to the members of the Subjects Committee and others were unnecessarily lavish. There was no sense of proportion observed as to the quantities served. I am finding fault with nobody. The extravagance came from a generous heart. It was all well meant. Forty years' tradition cannot be undone in a day, especially if no one likely to gain a hearing will repeatedly criticise it. I know, when I suggested to Vallabhbhai in 1921 that he should make a beginning, he retorted by saying that whilst he would try to attain simplicity and avoid extravagance, he would not allow his pet Gujarat to be considered miserly. I could not persuade him that if he did not have a temporary fountain costing several thousand rupees he would not be considered miserly. I told him too that whatever he did was bound to be copied by his successors. Vallabhbhai

would not take the odium of being considered miserly. I advise Cawnpore to lead the way. The miserliness of Cawnpore may be considered the extravagance of tomorrow. There were many things Vallabhbai did discard. I did not hear any remarks about the disappearance of the things that were really not a felt want.

Let us remember that the Congress is intended to represent the poorest toilers who are the salt of India. Our scale must be so far as possible adjusted to theirs. We must therefore be progressively economical without being inefficient and stingy.

In my opinion the charge for accommodation and food are much too heavy. We may do worse than take a lesson from the book of Swami Shraddhanandji. I remember the sheds he built for his guests who came for the Gurukul anniversary in 1916. He built grass sheds for them at a cost (I think) of about Rs. 2000. He invited contractors to open restaurants on the ground and made no charge for the accommodation. No one could complain of the arrangement. They knew what they were to expect. Nearly 40,000 people were thus accommodated on the Gurukul ground without the slightest difficulty and with practically no expense. And what is more each visitor received what he wanted and was at liberty to live cheaply or extravagantly.

I do not say that the Swami's plan should be copied in its entirety. But I do suggest that better and cheaper plans are imperatively necessary. The reduction of the delegate's fees from Rs. 10 to 1 was universally acclaimed. The reduction of lodging and dining charges would be I am sure still more appreciated.

The source of income should be a small entrance fee levied from every spectator. The Congress must be an annual fair where visitors may come and get instruction with amusement. The deliberative part should be an item round which the demonstrative programme should turn. It, therefore, should take place in decent time, as this year, and the appointments must be religiously observed.



I am not sure that the packing of all other conferences into one week serves any national purpose. In my opinion only those conferences should take place during the Congress week that aid and strengthen the Congress. The President and his 'Cabinet' must not be expected to give their attention to anything but Congress work. I know that, if there had been no other call upon my time, I could have better attended to the charge entrusted to me. I had not a moment left to me for contemplation. I was unable to frame the necessary recommendations for making the franchise a success. The fact is that the organisers of various conferences do not take their tasks seriously. They hold them because it has become the fashion to do so. I would urge workers in various directions to avoid the annual dissipation of energy.

The exhibition of indigenous arts and industries is an institution that should grow from year to year. The musical concert was a treat that thousands must have enjoyed. The lantern lectures tracing the tragic history of the ruin of the greatest national industry and the possibilities of its revival were apposite, instructive and amusing. I tender my congratulations to Satish Babu upon the thoughtful and thorough manner in which he organised these lectures. The spinning competition must also be a permanent feature. Its popularity is evinced by the number of competitors, the brilliance of results and the number of donors. This spinning movement is bringing out women from their seclusion as nothing else could have done. Of the 11 prize winners, 4 belonged to the gentle sex. It has given them a dignity and self-confidence which no university degree could give them. They are realising that their active assistance is just as indispensable as that of men and, what is more, such assistance can be as easily rendered by them as, if not more easily than, by men.

One thing I must not omit before I close these impressions. There were nearly seventy five volunteers, mostly Brahmans, who were engaged in conservancy work in the Congress camp. The Municipal *bhangis* were indeed taken, but it was thought

necessary to have the volunteers also. Kaka Kalelkar who was in charge of this corps tells me that this part of the work would not have been done as satisfactorily as it was, if the corps had not formed. He tells me too that the volunteers worked most willingly. Not one of them shirked the work which ordinarily very few would be prepared to undertake. And yet it is the noblest of all from one point of view. Indeed sanitary work must be regarded as the foundation of all volunteer training.

### *Namdharis*

I had a hard time of it meeting all and sundry and trying to give them satisfaction. The Namdhari Sikhs brought me a bundle of papers and expected me to attend to their grievance against the Akalis. Their patience and courtesy disarmed all unwillingness on my part. But my inability to attend to their cause was much greater than my unwillingness. Time would not wait even for their courtesy. They were themselves able to see that I was perfectly helpless. The only comfort I was able to give them was that when I next visited Lahore, I would certainly go through their papers and see to it that the Congress did them no injustice. I told them that although I was partial to the cause of the brave Akalis, I would be no party to any injustice or oppression being committed by them. Sardar Mangalsingh re-echoed my sentiment and said that he was always ready to show that the Akalis wanted nothing but reform of the Gurudwaras on a strictly moral basis.

### *Plea for Buddhists*

Mr. Pereira of Ceylon wanted me to interest the Congress in the Buddha Gaya temple. The reader will remember that a movement has been in progress for some years for the restoration to Buddhists of the great and historic temple at Buddha Gaya. But it seems to have made no tangible headway. At the Cocanada Congress Babu Rajendra Prasad was appointed to inquire into the matter and report. He had not been able to do so upto the time of the meeting. A Buddhist deputation came from Ceylon to Belgaum during the Congress week to plead the

Buddhistic cause personally before the Congress. Mr. Pereira had seen several leaders and then saw me. He really did not need to plead his cause before me. I was already a convert. But here again what was I to do? I had no time for anything else beyond what I had already undertaken. But Mr. Pereira was irresistible. I told him that I believed in his cause as much as he did, but that the Congress might not be able to help him much. He was persistent and took away from me the promise that I should at least let him address the subjects Committee and let him take the chance of being rejected. Mr. Pereira had confidence in himself. His pleasing manners and his brief but eloquent speech made an impression upon the committee which decided to consider the question there and then. But alas! upon discussion the committee discovered that it could not materially assist Mr. Pereira; it had not the report of its own deputy; it had exhaustively discussed the subject at the previous session and owing to sharp differences was obliged to drop it. The only thing, therefore, the committee was able to do was to ask Rajendra Babu to hasten his inquiry and let the Working Committee have his report on or before the end of the present month. There is no doubt that the possession of Temple should vest in the Buddhists. There may be legal difficulties. They must be overcome. If the report is true that animal sacrifice is offered in the temple, it is a sacrilege. It is equally a sacrilege if the worship is offered, as it is alleged, in a way calculated to wound the susceptibilities of Buddhists. We should take pride in helping the restoration of the temple to the rightful trustees. I hope Rajendra Babu will secure all the literature on the subject and produce a report which can serve as a guide for all who wish to advance the cause of the Buddhist claimants. Let me hope also that Mr. Pereira has remained in India and is assisting Rajendra Babu.

### *Teachers in Conference*

The national teachers met in informal conference and came to definite conclusions. The debate was interesting. It centred

round the charkha. Learned Pandits attended the conference. I hope that the teachers will carry out to the letter and in the spirit the resolutions addressed to themselves. It has been the bane of the national life to pass resolutions and never to enforce them. The teachers should be the last persons in the world to make vain promises. They have in their hands the moulding of the youth of the country. Let them know that the students are sure to copy their bad example of breach of their own word in preference to their lofty sermons on the sacredness of resolutions and promises. This year is a year of trial and test for the nation. The Congress has staked its all practically on a single issue i. e. the production and sale of khaddar and the boycott of foreign cloth. The national schools to be national have to assist this national work by the teachers and boys and girls learning the various processes incidental to the production of khaddar, by wearing it themselves and by spinning as much yarn as they can. Their other studies need not be neglected but they dare not omit the things that are required for the vital needs of the nation. The teachers have by an overwhelming majority accepted the position. I hope they will make it good by acting up to their promise.

### *Students*

The students too met in conference. These were not merely of the national schools and colleges but they were principally from Government schools. Mr. Reddy the president had a scheme for utilising the vacation and other leisure hours of students. His scheme was to commit the students (he would include the vakils also) to giving the nation at least 28 evenings every year, each volunteer to take up four villages in his neighbourhood as his field of work. Mr. Reddy proposed a course of lectures on a variety of subjects. For the time being I would occupy the leisure hours of these volunteers for the spread of khaddar. But this service is not the only way the students and practising vakils can help. Surely the least they can do is to use khaddar themselves and spin half an hour per day. The

vakils and students over 21 years should become members of the Congress and those who are under age should send their yarn as donation either to their own committee or to the A. I. K. B.

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*1st January, 1925*

## HOW TO DO IT?

BY M.K. GANDHI

The Congress has taken a tremendous forward step or as some say committed a tremendous folly at the instance of a mad man. Congressmen, whether willing spinners or unwilling, have to justify the step taken by working the spinning franchise. That work which some were doing is now transferred to every one who wishes to belong to the Congress. It is methodical labour that the Congress requires from every Congressman. If he is unwilling to do that labour, he has to hire it.

The task is obviously difficult. If it were easy, it would not be possible to expect the grand result one expects from its successful working. Even when it was a mere matter of collecting four annas per year, the task was found to be difficult. And today we have not, on the Congress register, in all the provinces fifty thousand such members. Now the Congress expects every one to spin 2000 yards per month or to get that quantity spun for him by another. Thus the workers have to keep in continuous touch with the spinners. Therein lies in my opinion the strength of the franchise. It gives the people political education of a high type.

The way to ensure success for every province is to fix the minimum of voters it expects to secure and not to rest till that number is secured. Now throughout India at the lowest computation there are at least five million wheels working. These spinners can all easily belong to the Congress. Those who are taking work from them can now invite them to devote

half an hour of their time to the nation by spinning at the wheel for that time. This does not require new organising. Cotton slivers etc. are there. All that is necessary is for the organisation to make a gift to the Congress of the slivers required to be supplied to the spinners for voluntary or franchise spinning. All that is required of spinners is to give the Congress free labour needed to spin 2000 yards of yarn. Then there is the voluntary spinning by non-professional spinners. Those who are now spinning have to ask their friends and neighbours to do likewise and become Congress members. This can be best done by each worker founding spinning club of twenty. To be efficient these clubs must be small and compact. The first member must be a proficient carder and spinner. For on him in the first instance will fall the burden of collecting cotton, carding it, slivering it and distributing the slivers among the members of the club. The third work is to provide for the unwilling spinners. The honestest class of unwilling spinner will naturally seek out a member of his own family to do the spinning for him. He then ensures the contribution of good and true handspun yarn. The next class of unwilling member will himself engage a professional spinner to spin for him. And the last class is that which will buy its yarn from the market and run the risk of having spurious yarn sold for genuine. For the sake of the common cause I would warn the Congressmen who are unwilling against the last method. Registration of membership for the last class is easy and, if many avail themselves of it, the practice will open the floodgates of fraud and may cause an injury to a cottage industry that is struggling to make headway against enormous odds. My hope is that there will be very few men and women who will be unwilling to spin for the sake of the Congress and the country. The word 'unwilling' has found place in the franchise for the sake of meeting the difficulties of those who are old Congressmen and whom I would not like to leave the Congress, even if they were willing to do so. But I shall hope that unwillingness will not be encouraged.

Mere production of handspun yarn will not make the idle and the starving work. It is the atmosphere of manual work and that too consisting of hand-spinning that is required to make the millions retake to the wheel. And that atmosphere can best be produced by all Congressmen regarding it as an honour for themselves personally to spin.

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*8th January, 1925*

### KATHIAWAD CONFERENCE ADDRESS

BY M. K. GANDHI

*Friends,*

The Presidentship of the Kathiawad Political Conference had been offered to me before I went to jail, but I had then refused to shoulder the responsibility attaching to that honourable position. As the reasons which then prompted my refusal do not exist any longer, I have accepted the honour now, though not without trepidation,—trepidation because there is a wide divergence between my own views and the views held by many, on political questions. Again the fact that I am President of the National Congress for the current year makes things rather awkward for me. That single burden is more than I can fairly discharge, and it would be almost too much for me during the year to undertake to guide the activities of this Conference in addition. If therefore presiding over your deliberations today implies any such responsibility, I may say that I am not at all in a position to do it justice. Moreover it would be unfair if the views which I express as president here are imputed for the Congress simply because I happen to lead it also.

It is necessary, therefore, for me to make it clear at the outset that my views about the Indian States have nothing to do with the views of the members of the Congress. My views are personal to me. They do not bear the imprimatur of the Congress.

If I have been deemed worthy to be President of this

Conference, I think it is because I am a native of Kathiawad and also because I enjoy close relations with the workers in this Conference. It is only an accident that I happen to lead the Congress at present.

Before I come to the subject proper, I must place on record the demise of Bhai Mansukhlal. You all know about my relations with him. No wonder that you must feel his absence today; but I cannot disguise the fact that I feel it very keenly. The death of the poet Mr. Manishanker Ratnaji Bhatt is also equally a matter for sorrow to you and to me. I had not the privilege of knowing him intimately. It is no small thing that his assistance is no longer available to us. May God give to the families of both the patience to bear their loss and may the knowledge that we share their grief lighten their sorrow.

### *The Congress and Indian States*

I have often declared that the Congress should generally adopt a policy of non-interference with regard to questions affecting Indian States. At a time when the people of British India are fighting for their own freedom, for them to interfere with the affairs of the Indian States would only be to betray impotence. Just as the Congress clearly cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian States and the British Government, even so will its interference be ineffective as to the relations between the Indian States and their subjects.

Still the people in British India as well as in the Indian States are one, for India is one. There is no difference for example between the needs and the manners and customs of Indians in Baroda and of Indians in Ahmedabad. The people of Bhavnagar are closely related with the people of Rajkot. Still, thanks to artificial conditions, the policy of Rajkot may be different from that of Bhavnagar. The existence of different policies in connection with one and the same people is a state of things which cannot last for any length of time. Consequently even without any interference by the Congress, the unseen pressure of circumstances alone must lead to the unification of



policies in spite of a multitude of separate jurisdictions. Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilisation.

But I am firmly of opinion that so long as British India is not free, so long as the people of British India have not attained real power, that is to say, so long as British India has not the power of self-expression,—in a word so long as British India does not obtain Swaraj, so long will India, British as well as Native remain in a distracted condition. The existence of a third power depends upon a continuance of such distraction. We can put our house in order only when British India has attained Swaraj.

### *The Status of Indian States under Swaraj*

When Swaraj is attained what will things be like? There will be a relation of mutual aid and co-operation, and destructive conflict will be a thing of the past. British India under Swaraj will not wish for the destruction of the Indian States, but will be helpful to them. And the Indian States will adopt a corresponding attitude towards British India.

The present condition of Indian States is in my opinion somewhat pitiable. For the princes have no independence. Real power does not consist in the ability to inflict capital punishment upon the subjects, but in the will and the ability to protect the subjects against the world. Today Indian States do not have this ability, and consequently by disuse the will also is as good as gone. On the other hand their power to oppress the subjects appears to have increased. As there is anarchy in the Empire there is anarchy in the States subordinate to the Empire. The anarchy in the States is not so much due to the Princes and the Chiefs as it is very largely to the present condition of India.

The present condition of India being opposed to the laws of Nature, that is of God, we find disorder and unrest all over the country. I definitely hold that all will be well if one of the component parts of India becomes self-governing.

*Who must Begin*

Who then must take the first step? It is obvious that British India must lead the way. The people there have a consciousness of their horrible condition and a desire to be free from it, and as knowledge follows in the wake of desire, so those people only who wish to be rid of their peril will find out and apply the means of deliverance. I have therefore often said that the liberation of British India spells the liberation of the States as well. When the auspicious day of the freedom of British India arrives, the relation of ruler and ruled in the Indian States will not cease but will be purified. Swaraj as conceived by me does not mean the end of kingship. Nor does it mean the end of Capital. Accumulated capital means ruling power. I am for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour etc. I do not wish for the supremacy of the one over the other. I do not think there is any natural antagonism between them. The rich and the poor will always be with us. But their mutual relations will be subject to constant change. France is a republic, but there are all classes of men in France.

Let us not be deluded by catch-words. Every single corruption which we notice in India is equally present in the so-called highly civilised nations of the West if under a variety of names. It is distance that lends enchantment to the view; hence things Western become invested with a sort of glamour in our eyes. In fact there are perpetual differences even in the West between the rulers and the ruled. There too people seek for happiness and suffer misery in return.

*About the Indian States*

Many Kathiawadis complain to me against the Princes and Chiefs of this beautiful country and take me to task for what they imagine to be my indifference. These impatient friends will perhaps not understand me when I say that I have not been indifferent, but have been seeking for and applying the

remedies for the present disorders. I have staked my all in the movement for Swaraj in the hope that Swaraj is a certain cure for all our maladies. As darkness vanishes at sunrise, so when the sun of Swaraj rises, the dark anarchy of rulers as well as of subjects will disappear in an instant.

### *Visits to Europe*

The administration of Indian States is the subject of constant criticism from which this small province has not been free. There is one common complaint about the Princes and Chiefs. Their fondness for visits to Europe increases day by day. One can understand their going to Europe on business or for the acquisition of knowledge. But a visit to Europe in the search of mere pleasure would seem to be intolerable. When a prince passes most of his time outside his State, there is chaos in his State. We have seen that in this age of democracy and dissemination of knowledge no state or organisation which is not popular or beneficial to the people can continue to exist. Indian States are not immune from the operation of this law. Their administration will always be compared with that of the British now, and of the Swaraj Government when Swaraj has been established. King George cannot leave England without the consent of his ministers. And yet his responsibilities are not so great as those of Indian Princes. Indian Princes retain all power in their own hands. They make the appointments even to minor posts. Their permission is needed even for the construction of a bridge. In these circumstances their visits to Europe are very distasteful to their subjects.

The expenditure incurred on these visits is also intolerable. If the institution of kingship has a moral basis, Princes are not independent proprietors but only trustees of their subjects for revenue received from them. It can therefore be spent by them only as trust money. It may be said that this principle has been almost completely carried out in the English Constitution. In

my humble opinion the lavish expenditure incurred by our princes in Europe is absolutely indefensible.

Sometimes this expenditure in Europe is sought to be justified on the plea that Princes go there for the benefit of their health : This plea is perfectly ludicrous. No one need, in the search of health leave a country where Himalaya, the king of mountains, exercises undisturbed sway, and which is watered by such mighty rivers as the Ganges, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra. A country where millions of men enjoy perfect health should be enough to supply the Princes' needs on that score.

### *Imitation of the West*

But perhaps the worst disadvantage of these excursions is the shallow imitation of the West by the Princes. We have much to learn and receive from the West, but there is also much in it which must be rejected. There is no reason to suppose that what suits the climate of Europe will equally suit all climates. Experience teaches us that different things suit different climates. The manners and customs of the West could be but ill-digested by the East, and *vice versa*. Among Western nations men and women dance together, it is said, with restraint and, as report goes do not overstep the bounds of decency although they indulge in spirituous liquors during the intervals of their dances. I need scarcely say what would be the consequences if we were to imitate this custom. How shameful to us is the case of an Indian prince which is being discussed in the newspapers just now in all its hideous detail ?

### *Unchecked Expenditure*

Another complaint is made in connection with the unchecked expenditure of Princes and Chiefs. Much of this is difficult to defend. Princes may have the right to spend money on luxuries and pleasure within limit. But I take it that even they do not wish for unrestricted liberty in this matter.

*Revenue System*

The revenue system in the States is also not free from blame. I am confident that their imitation of the British system has done a great injury to their subjects. The British revenue system may have a shadow of justification if we grant that it is morally right for a handful of Englishmen to maintain their hold over our country in any and every circumstance. There can be no such plea of compelling necessity in the case of the Indian Princes. They have nothing to fear from their subjects as their existence is never in danger. They do not need a large military force; no Prince has got this and the British would never permit it. Still they levy a taxation far beyond the capacity of the subjects to pay. I am pained to observe that our ancient tradition that revenue is intended only for popular welfare has been receiving but scant respect.

*Abkari*

The Princes' imitation of the British Abkari Department in order to increase their revenue is particularly distressing. It is said that Abkari is an ancient curse in India. I do not believe it to be so in the sense in which it is put. Princes in ancient times perhaps derived some revenue from the liquor traffic, but they never made the people the slaves of drink that they are now. Even granting that I am wrong that Abkari in its present form has been in existence from times immemorial, still I do not subscribe to the superstition that everything is good because it is ancient. I do not believe either that anything is good because it is Indian. He who runs may see that opium and such other intoxicants and narcotics stupify a man's soul and reduce him to a level lower than that of beasts. Trade in them is demonstrably sinful. Indian States should close all liquor shops and thus set a good example for the British administrators to follow. I congratulate the Kathiawad States which have tried to introduce this reform and I trust the day is not distant when there will be not a single liquor shop in our peninsula.

*Special Cases*

I constantly receive complaints against particular states for publication and criticism in *Young India* and *Navaajivan*, but I do not propose to refer to them just now, nor have I referred to them in those journals. I prefer to be silent so long as I am not in possession of all facts and have not heard what the States in question have to say. I hope to be enlightened about these things in the Subjects Committee and if then I find it proper to say or to do anything, I would certainly move in the matter.

*Khadi and the Spinning Wheel*

There are two items in which we can expect full co-operation from the Indian States. At one time our national economics was this that just as we produced our own corn and consumed it so did we produce our own cotton spin it in our homes and wear the clothes woven by our weavers from our own yarn. The first part of this description is still true while the latter part has almost ceased to hold good. A man generally spends upon his clothing a tenth of what he spends upon his food; hence instead of distributing ten percent of our income among ourselves we now send it to England or to our own mills. That means that we lose so much labour and in the bargain spend money on our clothing and consequently suffer a twofold loss. The result is that we stint ourselves in the matter of food in order to be able to spend on clothing, and sink into greater and greater misery day by day. We are bound to perish if the twin industries of agriculture and spinning as well as weaving disappear from our homes or our village. I will leave it to the members of the Conference to imagine what would be the consequence if all the villages under Bhavnagar were to order out their food and clothing from Bhavnagar. Still it is this unnatural procedure which we have adopted about our clothing. We either import our clothing from foreign countries or else get it from our mills. In either case it spells decay of our rural population.,

Let us not be deluded by the example of the other countries which import their clothing from outside and still do not suffer economically. In the other countries if people give up spinning and weaving they take to some still more remunerative instead. We on the other hand gave up spinning and partly weaving and had nothing else to occupy the time thus left vacant.

For Kathiawad it is very easy to escape from the economic catastrophe. Our Princes can encourage the people by personal example, and induce them to re-instate khadi in their homes and thus arrest the progress of the ever deepening poverty of Kathiawad. In my view the starting of mills and ginning factories in Kathiawad will not make for the people's prosperity, but will be in the nature of a disaster. It is not a healthy sign that the middle class people are compelled to leave the peninsula in search of a livelihood. There is no harm if a few enterprising men leave Kathiawad in search of fortune; but it is shameful and disgraceful for the States that their subjects being reduced to poverty should feel compelled to leave the country from pure helplessness. Whenever I have returned to Kathiawad after staying outside for sometime I have found that the people have been losing instead of gaining in stamina.

Fortunately the arts of handspinning and handweaving are being revived day by day and the importance of khadi is being realised. Will not the Princes and Chiefs help this movement? It will reflect no small credit on them if they educate the cultivators to stock cotton sufficient for the requirements of Kathiawad, and spread the use of khadi by wearing it themselves. All khadi need not be coarse. The Princes by encouraging handspinning and hand weaving can revive many arts and crafts connected with weaving. Royal ladies can spin fine yarn on wheels artistically painted and adorned with silver bells, get it woven into fine muslin and deck themselves with it. I have personally seen delicate varieties being woven in Kathiawad. That art has now nearly died out. Is it not the special duty of Princes to encourage such arts.

*Untouchability*

Another extremely important question is that of untouchability. The suppressed classes perhaps suffer more in K  thiawad than in other parts of Greater Gujarat. They are harassed even in railways. To succour the distressed is the special mission of Princes. They are the natural champions of the weak. Will they not come to the aid of the suppressed classes? Princes live by the blessings of their subjects. Will they not enrich their own lives by earning the blessings of the suppressed? The Scriptures proclaim that there is no distinction between a Brahmin and a Scavenger. Both have souls; both have five organs of sense. If they wish, the Princes can do much to ameliorate the condition of these classes and can remove untouchability by association with them in a religious spirit. Let them found schools and sink wells for the suppressed and find a throne in their hearts.

*Why I have Criticised ?*

I have not criticised the States for the sake of criticism. I know the Gandhi family has been connected with them for three generations. I have myself been witness to ministership in three States. I remember that the relations of my father and my uncle with their respective States were perfectly cordial. As I believe that I am not devoid of the sense of discrimination, I am anxious to see only the good points of the States. As I have already said I do not desire their destruction. I believe that the States can do much good to the people. And if I have embarked upon criticism it is in the interests of the Princes as well as of their subjects. My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realising Him. In passing criticisms I have endeavoured to state the truth and have been actuated purely by the spirit of non-violence or love. I pray that the Princes and Chiefs may understand and accept my remarks in the same spirit.



*Rama Rajya*

My ideal of Indian States is that of Rama Rajya. Rama taking his cue from a washerman's remark and in order to satisfy his subjects abandoned Sita who was dear to him as life itself and was a very incarnation of pity. Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth Rama gave to all kings of the world an object lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal householder. He lent splendour to his throne by his popular administration and proved that Rama Rajya was the acme of Swaraj. Rama did not need the very imperfect modern instrument of ascertaining public opinion by counting votes. He had captivated the hearts of the people. He knew public opinion by intuition as it were. The subjects of Rama were supremely happy.

Such Rama Rajya is possible even today. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times the first Caliphs may be said to have established Rama Rajya. Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected revenue running into crores and yet personally they were as good a *fakirs*. They received not a pie from the Public Treasury. They were ever watchful to see that the people got justice. It was their principle that one may not play false even with the enemy but must deal justly with him.

*To the People*

In my humble opinion I have done my duty by the Princes in saying a few words about them. A word now to the people. The popular saying, as is the king, so are the people, is only a half truth. That is to say it is not more true than its converse, as are the people so is the prince. Where the subjects are watchful a prince is entirely dependent upon them for his status. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the Prince will cease to function as a protector and become an oppressor instead. Those who are not wide awake have no right to blame their Prince. The prince as well

as the people are mostly creatures of circumstances. Enterprising princes and peoples mould circumstances for their own benefit. Manliness consists in making circumstance subservient to ourselves. Those who will not heed themselves perish. To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach Fate, not to blame others. He who understands the doctrine of self-help blames himself for failure. It is on this ground that I object to violence. If we blame others where we should blame ourselves and wish for or bring about their destruction, that does not remove the root cause of the disease which on the contrary sinks all the deeper for the ignorance thereof.

### *Satyagraha*

We then see that the people themselves are as responsible as and even more responsible than the Princes for the defects pointed out by me. If public opinion is opposed to a particular line of action, it should be impossible for the Prince to adopt it. Opposition here does not mean merely inaudible murmur. Public opposition is effective only where there is strength behind it. What does a son do when he objects to some action of his father? He requests the father to desist from the objectionable course, i. e. presents respected prayers, he non-co-operates with him to the extent even of leaving the paternal roof. This is pure justice. Where father and son are uncivilized, they quarrel, abuse each other and often even come to blows. An obedient son is ever modest, ever peaceful and ever loving. It is only his love which on due occasion compels him to non-co-operate. The father himself understands this loving non-co-operation. He cannot endure abandonment by or separation from the son, is distressed at heart and repents. Not that it always happens thus. But the sons's duty of non-co-operation is clear.

Such non-co-operation is possible between a prince and his people. In particular circumstances it may be the people's duty. Such circumstances can exist only where the latter are by nature fearless and are lovers of liberty. They generally

appreciate the laws of the State and obey them voluntarily without the fear of punishment. Reasoned and willing obedience to the laws of the State is the first lesson in non-co-operation.

The second is that of tolerance. We must tolerate many laws of the State, even when they are inconvenient. A son may not approve of some orders of the father and yet he obeys them. It is only when they are unworthy of tolerance and immoral that he disobeys them. The father will at once understand such respectful disobedience. In the same way it is only when a people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the State that they acquire the right of Civil Disobedience.

The third lesson is that of suffering. He who has not the capacity of suffering cannot non-co-operate. He who has not learnt to sacrifice his property and even his family when necessary can never non-co-operate. It is possible that a prince enraged by non-co-operation will inflict all manner of punishments. There lies the test of love, patience, and strength. He who is not ready to undergo the fiery ordeal cannot non-co-operate. A whole people cannot be considered fit or ready for non-co-operation when only an individual or two have mastered these three lessons. A large number of the people must be thus prepared before they can non-co-operate. The result of hasty non-co-operation can only lead to harm. Some patriotic young men who do not understand the limitations noted by me grow impatient. Previous preparation is needed for non-co-operation as it is for all important things. A man cannot become a non-co-operator by merely wishing to be one. Discipline is obligatory. I do not know that many have undergone the needful discipline in any part of Kathiawad. And when the requisite discipline has been gone through probably non-co-operation will be found to be unnecessary.

As it is, I observe the necessity for individuals to prepare themselves in Kathiawad as well as in other parts of India. Individuals must cultivate the spirit of service, renunciation,

truth, non-violence, self-restraint, patience etc. They must engage in constructive work in order to develop those qualities. Many reforms would be effected automatically if we put in a good deal of silent work among the people.

### *The Politicals*

Kathiawad is famous for its political class. This class affects an exaggerated politeness and consequently it has developed hypocrisy, timidity and sycophancy. They are an educated body of men and therefore they must become the pioneers in reforms. They can do much for the people if they wish. We find contentment among the people in places where these political officials are men of character. Needless to say that my remarks apply to the politicals as a class. I do not wish to suggest that they apply to every member of that class. On the contrary, I know that some of the best of workers are drawn from this class. Hence I have never lost hope about this class. Much good might result if only it serves the States not for making money but for pure service.

### *Other Classes*

Again constructive service is easy for those who not serving the States have adopted an independent profession. I am anxious to see them develop the qualities mentioned above. We want silent workers and pure fighters who would merge themselves among the people. Workers of this description can be counted on one's fingers. Is there even one such worker for every village in Kathiawad? I know the answer is in the negative. The class of people who will read this will hardly have any idea of rural life. Those who have some idea of it will not like it. Still, India and hence Kathiawad lives in the villages.

### *The Spinning Wheel*

How is this service to be rendered? Here I give the first place to the spinning wheel. I have heard much against it. But I know the time is near when the very thing which is being

abused today will be worshipped as *Sudarshana Chakra*. I am confident that if we do not take it up voluntarily the force of circumstances will compel us. The study of Indian economics is the study of the spinning wheel. It is the *sine qua non* for the revival of our languishing village industries. I do not look upon hand-spinning as an occupation but as a duty incumbent upon followers of all religious sects and denominations.

An American writer says that the future lies with nations that believe in manual labour. Nations are tired of the worship of lifeless machines multiplied *ad infinitum*. We are destroying the matchless living machines viz. our own bodies by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilised. We dare not ignore it. The spinning wheel is the auspicious symbol of *Sharir Yajna*—body labour. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice we became traitors to the country and banged the door in the face of the Goddess of Fortune. The numerous men and women in India whose bodies are mere skeletons bear witness to this. My revered friend Mr. Shastriar says I am interfering even in the people's choice of their dress. This is perfectly true. It is the duty of every servant of the nation to do so whenever it becomes necessary. I would certainly raise my voice against it, if the nation takes, (say), to the pantaloons. It is wholly unsuited to our climate. It is the duty of every Indian to raise his voice against the nation using foreign cloth. The opposition really is not to the cloth being foreign but to the poverty which its importation brings in its train. If the nation gives up its *Jawar* and *Bajri* and imports oats from Scotland or rye from Russia I would certainly intrude into the nation's kitchen, would scold it to the full and even sit *dharna* and make the agony of my soul heard. Such intrusions have even happened within recent times. During the late diabolical war in Europe people were compelled to raise particular crops and the States controlled the food and drink of their subjects.

Those who wish to serve in the villages cannot but take up

the study of the spinning wheel. Hundreds and even thousands of young men and women can earn their livelihood by its means and doubly repay the nation for it. This work means organisation and familiarity with every villager to whom one could easily impart a rudimentary knowledge of economics and politics. The work might also include the true education of the village children and give one an insight into the many wants and shortcomings of villages.

Not only is there no conflict possible between a Prince and his subjects in this khadi work, but on the other hand their relations might be expected to become cordial. The fulfilment of this expectation is conditional on the workers humility. I am therefore neither ashamed nor do I hesitate in asking this Political Conference to give prominence to the spinning wheel.

### *The Suppressed Classes*

Such also is the work among untouchables. It is the bounden duty of all Hindus to remove untouchability. Here also no interference need be feared from any Prince. I firmly believe that Hindus would regain the strength of soul if by serving the suppressed and receiving their hearts' blessing they carried on a process of self-purification. Untouchability is a great blot on Hinduism. It is necessary to remove that blot. The Hindu who serves the suppressed will be a saviour of Hinduism and will enshrine himself in the hearts of his suppressed brothers and sisters.

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by arts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. When the members of this Conference will prepare themselves by loving service they will acquire the right to speak on behalf of the people and no Prince will be able to resist them. Then only is there an atmosphere for non-co-operation, if it ever becomes necessary.

But I have faith in the Princes. They will at once recognise the force of such enlightened and forceful public

opinion. After all the Princes too are Indians. This country is all in all to them as it is to us. It is possible to touch their hearts. I for one do not think it difficult to make a successful appeal to their sense of justice. We have never made an earnest effort. We are in a hurry. In conscientiously preparing ourselves for service lies our victory, the victory of Princes as well as the people.

### *Hindu-Muslim Unity*

The third question is that of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have one or two letters from Kathiawad which show that this question is exercising some minds even in Kathiawad. I need scarcely say that there must be unity between Hindus and Mussalmans. No worker dare ignore any single part of the nation.

### *My Field of Labour*

I know that to many my speech will appear incomplete and even insipid. But I cannot give any practical or useful advice by going outside my province. My field of labour is clearly defined and it pleases me. I am fascinated by the law of love. It is the philosopher's stone for me. I know *Ahimsa* alone can provide a remedy for our ills. In my view the path of non-violence is not the path of the timid or the unmanly. *Ahimsa* is the height of Kshatriya Dharma as it represents the climax of fearlessness. In it there is no scope for flight or for defeat. Being a quality of the soul it is not difficult of attainment. It comes easily to a person who feels the presence of the soul within. I believe that no other path but that of non-violence will suit India. The symbol of that *Dharma* for India is the spinning wheel as it alone is the friend of the distressed and the giver of plenty for the poor. The law of love knows no bounds of space or time. My Swaraj, therefore, takes note of Bhangis, Dheds, Dublas and the weakest of the weak, and except the spinning wheel I know no other thing which befriends all these.

I have not discussed your local questions of which I have not sufficient knowledge. I have not dealt with the questions

of the ideal constitution for the States as you alone can be its fashioners. My duty lies in discovering and employing means by which the nation may evolve the strength to enforce its will. When once the nation is conscious of its strength it will find its own way or make it. That Prince is acceptable to me who becomes a Prince among his people's servants. The subjects are the real master. But what is the servant to do if the master goes to sleep? Every thing, therefore, is included in trying for a true national awakening.

Such being my ideal there is room for Indian States in Swaraj as conceived by me and there is full protection guaranteed to the subjects for their rights. The true source of rights is duty. I have therefore spoken only about the duties of Princes as well as the peoples. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will o' the wisp. The more we pursue them the farther will they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: "Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone." Action is duty; fruit is the right.

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*8th January, 1925*

## THE WORKING COMMITTEE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The selection of the Working Committee was ultimately left by the A. I. C. C. to Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and me. I have been charged with having yielded everything to the Swarajists. If I have done so, I pride myself on the fact. Full surrender must be full. The fact however is that no pressure whatsoever was put upon me to withdraw a single No-changer's name. I deliberately withdrew C. Rajgopalachari's, Vallabhbhai's and Shankerlal Banker's names. It was a matter of honour to have Sarojini Devi and Sardar Mangal-



Singh on the Committee. Mr. Kelkar was anxious to retire in favour of Mr. Aney. I would not listen to it. And I was anxious to have Mr. Aney as soon as his name was mentioned. Let the reader rest assured that the whole selection was made in a spirit of perfect comradeship. Assume honesty (and it must be assumed) on the part of both the groups and the task of either is difficult enough. Although the degree of faith and therefore the emphasis is different, both have to strive to find a common method of working the common programme. In a Working Committee with a decided majority of No-changers strong resolutions can no doubt be carried for khaddar work but they cannot carry much weight with those who have only reluctantly accepted the khaddar franchise. Whereas resolutions of a Working Committee in which the predominant voice is that of the Swarajists, though they may be mild are sure to carry far greater weight with the Swarajists. And my business is to carry the latter with me wholeheartedly. I want to act upon them and I want them to act upon me. Nothing, therefore can be better than that the Swarajist leaders and among them the ablest and most uncompromising opponent of the spinning franchise and I should be thrown together in an atmosphere in which we must pull together. I do not need that kind of contact with the enthusiasts. They are expected to work away with all the strength that conviction must give them. They do not need resolutions or instructions as a spur to action. If therefore we mean in the course of the year to achieve an unbreakable unity between the two wings, the selection of the Working Committee is, I hold, ideal. Any way it must produce an atmosphere the most favourable for the purpose.

I shall leave no stone unturned to achieve the end. Hence I propose during the years to carry no motion or proposal that might be of a party character. Neither the spinning wheel nor the boycott of foreign cloth can be expeditiously worked in the teeth of opposition from within the Congress ranks. Indeed we must strive to gain the support of Non-Congressmen for the

national constructive programme. They may not like spinning or wearing khaddar as part of the franchise, but I have not met many Liberals who have any objection to hand spinning as a cottage industry or to the use of khaddar as such and apart from the franchise. It may be constitutionally impossible for all parties to accept the existing Congress creed or the new franchise, and therefore to become Congressmen. But I hope that the existence of the creed or the new franchise will not be a bar against joint work wherever it is possible.

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*15th January, 1925*

### A NOTICE?

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following notice was delivered to me at Belgaum:

"We, the undersigned, delegates of the Kolaba District Congress Committee in the Maharashtra Province, beg leave to direct your attention to the special circumstances of our district. The Kolaba district is not a cotton-producing district, nor is it near such a cotton centre. The people of the district, therefore, naturally have no inclination towards spinning. Even in the first year of the non-cooperation movement, it was only with great difficulty that a few charkhas could be introduced which too span for only some months.

"The Kolaba District Congress Committee has, therefore, after full consideration of these facts, passed a resolution in September last, to the effect that this spinning franchise cannot work in this district and its introduction in the Congress Constitution would endanger the very existence of almost all the committees in the district. We, therefore, inform you at the earliest opportunity after the spinning franchise is adopted by the Congress, that, though several of us have either voted for the resolution in the Congress or have refrained from voting against it only

because the Swarajya Party had decided to treat it as a party question, and others because they thought it inevitable to do so for the sake of unity in the Congress, it is difficult for us to carry it out in practice, so that you may not afterwards have any occasion for disappointment."

It is dated 27th December and signed by twelve members including the President and the Secretary. I hope that the signatories do not propose to carry their threat into effect. If these gentlemen have voted for, or refrained from voting against the spinning resolution for the sake of discipline or unity, I beg to point out to them that the mere voting or refraining does not fulfil the conditions of discipline or unity. To be effective, discipline means the carrying into effect of the terms of the resolution in a proper soldierly spirit of obedience although it may not commend itself to reason. Such was the spirit of the Light Brigade whose memorable charge has been made famous by Tennyson. Such was also the spirit of the soldiers who although they knew they were running into the jaws of death followed their general during the Boer war and were riddled to death by the Boer bullets on the heights of Spionkop. A mechanical assent by them to their general's proposition that the heights should be carried would have meant nothing and would have meant even disgrace. It was the action though reluctant yet as daring as that of the staunchest believers that made them heroes. Be it noted that they fought a battle in which defeat was a certainty. But heroes are made in the hour of defeat. Success is, therefore, well described as a series of glorious defeats. What if the franchise is found at the end of the year to have produced a failure? It will be a glorious defeat if the Congressmen irrespective of parties and irrespective of willingness or unwillingness will work their best to make it a success.

Nor is it proper to say as the signatories have said that many have voted for the resolution for the sake of unity if they have not intended to work in accordance with the resolution. Unity is made of sterner stuff. It is not 'a showy nothing' to be merely named on a paper resolution. Unity to be achieved

means solid action in terms of the resolution. I do not believe in the Councils. But because my co-workers believe in it, I have given them the use of the Congress name. Now if my heart does not co-operate with my lip or my pen, I am a hypocrite and not a believer in unity. Having voted for the resolution that authorises Council entry, I must wish well to the Swarajists. I must in no way hamper their progress by any act of mine, I must even help them wherever I can to the best of my ability and if they fail, they should not be able to say that they have failed because I refused to help within the limits previously and mutually understood. Assuming that the No-changers do not in any way whatsoever hamper the Swarajists, even the latter's failure, if there is to be failure, will be a success because at the end of it we shall have found another way of compassing our end. Exactly similarly if all parties have done their best to make the franchise a success and it fails, we shall all realise the fact frankly, accept the defeat and jointly set about cutting another road to success. For out of our defeats, if we are determined, we shall find the way that leads us to our goal.

And what is the difficulty these Kolaba friends find except that of their own creation? If there is no cotton grown in their district let them buy it. Kolaba is nearer Bombay than Manchester. Will they be surprised to learn that not a pod of cotton grows anywhere near Manchester and the gentlemen there find no difficulty in importing and carding and spinning it? I assure the friends of the Kolaba district that they will not find it half as difficult as the citizens of Manchester to import cotton in their district. Let me further hearten them by telling them that if they have not the will to import cotton and organise carding and spinning, the Congress resolution permits them to buy handspun yarn and pay the required quantity to the Congress. Have they the will to buy yarn? It will still be well provided that the yarn is handspun and is even and well-twisted.

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*15th January, 1925*

## CONFESSION OF FAITH

"After the A. I. C. C. meeting at Ahmedabad on the 28th June last Mahatmaji had a heart to heart exchange of thoughts at the Ashram in Sabarmati with the nearest co-workers of the No-change party from all provinces. At that time it was suggested by some that No-changers should surrender all Congress executives to the Swarajists and that Mahatmaji should withdraw his connection with the Congress and work his own programme of Khadi and other construction independently from outside. I was opposed to this idea. Mahatmaji ultimately rejected the suggestion on the ground mainly that such a withdrawal would be violence and seriously injure the Swarajists whom he wished to serve as far as possible without doing violence to his own principles. Since then several important events have happened and the present position is that Mahatmaji is President of the Congress and head of its executive, while the Working Committee which is charged with the executive responsibility for all Congress work is predominantly Swarajist. Mahatmaji is no partyman in one sense. But it must be admitted that he does not agree in some fundamentals with the Swarajists. The relationship between the No-changers and the Swarajists is settled by the Calcutta Pact. By agreement and without trial by party votes, the Congress has given its authority to the Swarajist activities in the Council, and under this agreement the Swarajists have given their vote and consented to work for the Spinning Franchise introduced by Mahatmaji.

"The main work of the Congress during the year being the organisation of membership in accordance with the new franchise, and this together with Khadi production being work of a kind and magnitude demanding the utmost organising abilities and industrious application of those whose faith in the *Charkha* is unlimited, it may at first appear that the executive of the Congress this year should be a strong No-change-

Charkha-Working Committee, and that Swarajists whose faith and whose time are both greatly limited in this matter ought really not to man the chief executive body of the Congress, not to speak of being the predominant and almost sole element in composing it. But on further consideration one will see the philosophy underlying this arrangement which was not thrust upon but deliberately brought about by Mahatmaji with the whole-hearted approval of his No-change lieutenants.

“The new franchise depends for its success on the work at the distant end of the string,—the faithful and diligent work in the towns and villages of the humble volunteers and of those who, amid domestic difficulties, public indifference and calumny and ridicule all round, toil with the carding bow the tool box and cotton,—not on the resolution of the Working Committee at the top. Mahatmaji has secured the adoption of the policy and has further secured a calm and peaceful atmosphere for working it. For the real toilers that have the patience and the faith, this is enough. I do not say that Mahatmaji and the bottom-workers alone are enough, and that the District Congress Committees and Provincial Congress Committees and the All-India Congress Committees are to be ignored. They serve to guide, help, and instruct. But in the work involved in introducing and organising the Congress on a basis of manual labour, the active share taken by the workers is of decreasing importance as we go from the primary strata upwards to the All-India Working Committee. This is necessarily so by reason of the character of the work which is bodily labour and not brain work.

“If then we remember this with reference to the programme of positive work before us, and also that the aim of No-changers is, if and when necessary, to hand over all offices and power in the Congress organisation to the Swarajists who may need it more than the No-changers, i. e. with regard to their special programme of work, and further that it must be our aim in order to make the surrender fruitful of results to both sides and free from harmful effects, that it should be peaceful, quiet and almost unperceived,—we will be able to understand the

philosophy underlying Mahatmaji's constitution of the Working Committee and his present method of work.

"No-changers who feel that the salvation of the country, the permanent Anchor of its Hope, rests on the Charkha, must not look up, on this side or that, but prayerfully carry the burden. There is no rest or fatigue for us. The Wheel is our hope, our joy, our friend, our good angel. We must work for it in our waking hours, and dream about it when we sleep. I did not see fully the meaning of things at first. I therefore thought Mahatmaji went along paths where I saw no logic or light. But I now see things clearly, and hope all those who felt distracted by doubts like myself will also see, Spin, spin and spin and make others spin- this is our single *Mantra*, our *Gayatri*.

"While I saw all this, I felt at the same time that there was some sort of unreality, some sort of political playing with truth casting a shadow over all this plan of Satyagraha. But here I depend on the judgment of the *Guru* whose instinctive sense of Truth is so much greater than mine, and I feel at ease."

It gives me such comfort to be able to have this unsolicited declaration from Rajagopalachari. The reader knows my regard for his sanity and judgment. And I was grieved whilst he was torn with doubts and fears. There is no 'playing with truth' in the Charkha programme, for Satyagraha is not predominantly civil disobedience but a quiet and irresistible pursuit of truth. On rarest occasions it becomes civil disobedience. But conscious and willing obedience must, in the case of a large body of workers, precede it. The Charkha which is the embodiment of willing obedience and calm persistence must therefore succeed before there is civil disobedience. It is because I am much afraid of playing with truth in even thinking of civil disobedience before the necessary atmosphere has been ensured that I must insist upon the Charkha and upon full surrender to the Swarajists, and for that matter to all concerned, even though the workers may be reduced to the number of the digits on the fingers of one hand only. We must not have

violent disobedience under cover of civil disobedience. The lesson of Chauri Chaura has sunk too deep in me to be easily obliterated. Not only is there no trace of regret in me for the Bardoli decision but I hold it to be one of the greatest among my services to the country.

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*29th January, 1925*

## INTERROGATORIES ANSWERED

BY M. K. GANDHI

During last month I had a hearty discussion with an English friend, who takes deep interest in matters Indian and who is anxious to serve India to the best of his ability. He asked me whether I would publish the gist of our conversation. I readily agreed but asked him to jot down the points he raised which he gladly did. I do not disclose the friend's name as the name does not matter. It is my views that matter because they are exciting some interest at the present moment. If I am a friend of Englishmen, as I claim to be, I must patiently answer all the doubts that may arise in their minds. The English friend put the questions not all on his own behalf but mostly on behalf of those Englishmen who had originally raised them.

Here are the questions with answers.

Q. What is the real purpose of your insistence upon the Khaddar programme as a means of obtaining Swaraj?

A. I am interested in the attainment of Swaraj only by non-violent and truthful means. This is possible only through a diligent and successful prosecution of the Khaddar programme. Swaraj can be peacefully attained only if the whole Indian mass work as with one will, be it on ever so little a constructive and useful thing for ever so little a time. Such an effort presupposes national consciousness. This is possible only through the spinning wheel. It is not remunerative enough for individuals. It is, therefore, not enough incentive for an individual selfishly inclined. It is however enough to raise at a



bound the national prosperity in an appreciable manner. An increase of one rupee per head per year may mean nothing to the individual. But Rs. 5,000/- in a village containing a population of as many would mean the payment of land revenue or other dues. Thus the spinning wheel means national consciousness and a contribution by every individual to a definite constructive national work. If India can demonstrate her capacity for such an achievement by voluntary effort she is ready for political Swaraj. Any lawful demand of a nation with a will of its own must prove irresistible. I have hitherto said nothing of the immense economic value of the wheel and its product Khaddar. For it is obvious. The economic prosperity of India must indirectly affect the course of her political history—even using the word ‘political’ in its narrow sense. Lastly, when the exploitation of India by Lancashire ceases by reason of the ability of India through the Wheel to clothe herself and consequently to exclude foreign cloth and therefore also Lancashire cloth, England will have lost the feverish anxiety at any cost to hold India under subjection.

Q. This means revolutionising the national taste? Do you expect to persuade your countrymen to give up the use of foreign cloth?

A. I do. After all I am asking for very little. Millions are indifferent as to what they wear. They merely look to the cheapness of the articles they buy. It is the middle class whose taste has to be revised. I do not think that the substitution of foreign cloth by Khaddar is an impossible task for them. Moreover it should be remembered that nowadays it is possible for Khaddar to suit a large variety of tastes. And improvement in fineness is making steady progress. I am therefore of opinion that if any constructive work is capable of success, it is the Khaddar programme.

Q. What do you mean by Swaraj and what are its limitations, if any?

A. By Swaraj I mean the Government of India by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number

of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. This Government should be quite consistent with the British connection on absolutely honourable and equal terms. Personally I have not despaired of the substitution for the present servile condition of equal partnership or association. But I would not, for one moment, hesitate to countenance or bring about complete severance if it became necessary *i.e.* if the connection impeded India's full growth.

Q. To what extent are you committed to the programme and methods of the Swaraj Party?

A. I am personally committed neither to the programme nor to the methods of the Swaraj party. As a Congressman, I recognise its undoubted influence in the country and therefore its right to represent the Congress—a right which it now enjoys by arrangement but which it otherwise might have secured by a party vote.

Q. What are the relations between you and the leaders of that party?

A. They are of a most cordial character. I give them the same credit for patriotic service and sacrifice that I would like to claim for myself.

Q. It has been stated that you have surrendered to Mr. Das—?

A. The statement is true in the sense that I have avoided a quarrel among Congressmen. But it is not true if it is intended to convey the meaning that I have surrendered an iota of my principles.

Q. Was not your attitude on the Saha resolution different from the one you have now adopted?

A. Not in the least. At the time of the Saha resolution I was opposing an internal error. At the present moment, I am resisting external oppression based on erroneous assumptions. Moreover, my attempt then to secure consistency of conduct and control of the Congress executive by one party must not be

confused with my action on the Saha resolution. The two things were totally different and were not even inter-related. As soon as I discovered that the attempt to secure unity of control led to bad blood, I retraced my steps and declared complete surrender to the Swaraj Party.

Q. It has been stated that you have lost your moral authority by your surrender—?

A. Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort. I am not conscious of loss of moral authority, for I am utterly unconscious of being aware of any single act compromising my moral conduct. What I have undoubtedly lost is the intellectual co-operation of a large number of educated men in my presentation of the means of attaining Swaraj, e. g. the spinning wheel.

Q. Why do you insist upon non-co-operation while every one of the activities has failed? What is the purpose in speaking of its suspension?

A. I do not insist now. But I do not admit that every one of the activities has failed. On the contrary, every activity of non-co-operation succeeded to an extent. I can speak only of its suspension because to me non-co-operation is a vital principle of life and because in my opinion it has done India and, if you will, the world an amount of good of which, at present, we have not adequate conception and also because, if I found an atmosphere of substantial non-violence and real co-operation among the people and if the end remained still unattained, I should not hesitate to advise its resumption by the nation.

Q. How do you propose to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem?

A. By constantly insisting upon both the communities cultivating mutual respect and trust and by insisting upon Hindus surrendering out of strength to the Mussalman in every mundane matter and by showing that those who claim to be nationalists and are in an overwhelming majority should stand out in any unseemly competition for legislative or administrative control.

I hope also to achieve the end by demonstrating that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

Q. What is your own real attitude towards the English and your hope about England?

A. My attitude towards the English is one of utter friendliness and respect. I claim to be their friend, because it is contrary to my nature to distrust a single human being or to believe that any nation on earth is incapable of redemption. I have respect for Englishmen, because I recognise their bravery, their spirit of sacrifice for what they believe to be good for themselves, their cohesion and their powers of vast organisation. My hope about them is that they will at no distant date retrace their steps, revise their policy of exploitation of undisciplined and ill-organised races and give tangible proof that India is an equal friend and partner in the British Commonwealth to come. Whether such an event will ever come to pass will largely depend upon our own conduct. That is to say, I have hope of England because I have hope of India. We will not for ever remain disorganised and imitative. Beneath the present disorganisation, demoralisation and lack of initiative I can discover organisation, moral strength and initiative forming themselves. A time is coming when England will be glad of India's friendship and India will disdain to reject the proffered hand because it has once despoiled her. I know that I have nothing to offer in proof of my hope. It is based on an immutable faith. And it is a poor faith that is based on proof commonly called.

*The following notes appeared in 'Young India' of 29th January, 1925 :—*

#### IN CASE OF MISAPPROPRIATION.

An Andhra friend writes :—

“Many people are taking undue advantage and not

paying the amounts due to Congress Committees and Khaddar Boards knowing it for certain that they would not proceed against them in British courts. This of course amounts to misappropriation and cheating if not worse. In view of what you have written already regarding misappropriation of funds, and now the removal of ban on courts, I am quite sure that the Congress Committees can proceed in courts under these circumstances."

I have already given my opinion in such cases. I have no doubt that even when the boycott of courts was on foot it was the duty of Congress Committees to proceed against fraudulent and defaulting debtors. The boycott was not meant for the Congress to commit suicide. It presupposed honesty on the part of those who dealt with the Congress.

### A. I. K. B'S RESOLUTIONS

I invite the attention of all concerned to the following resolutions of the A. I. K. B. regarding the working of the Congress Franchise:

- "In view of the Congress having made hand spinning part of the franchise and in order to enable the Provincial Committees to receive facilities in the matter, the All-India Khadi Board resolves that it will be prepared to give the following assistance directly as well as through the Provincial Khadi Boards.
1. The Board will be prepared to supply cotton to any province where cotton is not easily available.
  2. The Board will be prepared to consider applications for cotton loans on terms to be arranged.
  3. This Board advises the Provincial Khadi Boards to render every possible assistance to enable members to get models for making good Charkhas and carding bows and supply all necessary accessories as also to assist in the matter of getting carded slivers until members make their own arrangements.
  4. The Board will so far as possible, arrange for experts

to give the necessary tuition in carding, spinning, etc., under arrangements to be made with the Board.

5. The Board will be prepared to buy yarn from any provincial Congress Committee at Bazaar rates or to get it woven for the Committees.

6. The Board will be prepared, if so desired, to supply hand-spun yarn at reasonable rates in connection with the yarn required for satisfying the franchise.

7. The Board warns individuals and committees against buying hand-spun yarn from the Bazaar for the purpose of the yarn franchise as the Bazaar yarn is likely to be mill yarn or spun from mill slivers or and not to be even and well-twisted. (It is possible only for experts to distinguish between mill-spun and hand-spun yarn or to say when yarn is well twisted, even experts will be unable to say when hand-spun yarn is spun from mill made slivers.

8. Lastly, the Board will be prepared to give any further information or help to individuals or committees which it is in its power to give."

Time is running against us. I hope, therefore, that the Provincial Committees are organising themselves under the new franchise. Properly worked, its possibilities are immense. But the working requires attention to the minutest details. And when once the organisation is in working order, it must grow from day to day in geometrical progression and make the Congress a self supporting wealth producing institution.

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*5th February, 1925*

### IS A SWARAJIST A CONGRESSMAN?

I have before me a curious letter in which the writer says, a distinction is being made by Congressmen in Sind between Swarajists and Congressmen, and the former are obstructed by the latter. I should have hoped that such a thing would be impossible after the Belgaum Congress which recognised the

Swaraj party as an integral party of the Congress and which suspends the non-co-operation programme. Every Swarajist who subscribes to the Congress creed and conforms to the new franchise is as much a Congressman as the one who is not a Swarajist, that is to say, that does not believe in Council-entry. Let it be also remembered that the Swaraj party has itself altered its constitution to make it obligatory on every member of that party to accept the Congress franchise. There should therefore not only be no obstruction by one or the other but each should help the other wherever the help is not inconsistent with one's conscience.

5th March, 1925

### GOD AND CONGRESS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend writes:--

"There is one matter on which I have been longing to approach you for an explanation. It is about the term 'God'. As a national worker I would not have anything to say against such a passage as this occurring in a recent number of *Young India*: 'I present it (Rama Nam) to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by over much learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life, but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves.' (*Young India*, 22--I- '25, p. 27.) For it is a confession of your individual faith; and I know also that you have not failed on occasions to put in a word of praise about conscientious atheists where it was deserved. As witness the following sentences in your 'Niti Dharma\*': 'We come across many wicked men, priding themselves on their religiosity, while doing the most immoral deeds. On the other hand, there are also men like the late Mr. Bradlaugh who, while being extremely virtuous and moral,

*Niti Dharma* By M. K. Gandhi. S. Ganesan, Publisher, As. 8.

take pride in calling themselves atheists.' As for the faith in Rama Nam which 'alone saves us in the hour of danger and temptation,' I may mention the martyrdom of the rationalist Francisco Ferrer in 1909 at Barcelona in Spain at the hands of men who believed on Jesus' name, their Rama Nam. I shall not dwell on the Holy Wars, the burnings and mutilations of heretics, and the torture and slaughter of animals and sometimes of men in sacrifice—all of which have been carried out 'for the greater glory of God and in His name.' This is by the bye.

As a national worker, however, I feel, I must draw your attention to the objection which Mr.—raised (on behalf of a nationalist friend of his) to your saying that only 'God-fearing' men can become true N.-C.-O.s, and remind you of the assurance you then gave to all to the effect that the programme of national work does not require a man to declare his religious faith. (Vide *Young India*, May 4, 1921, pp. 138-9.) That objection applies with greater force now than it did at that time, because 'God' has now a place on pledges and vows such as that administered to Congress Volunteers, which begins 'with God as witness, I..'. Now you must be knowing that the Buddhists (like the Burmese—now an 'Indian' people, and your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi) and the Jains, as well as many Indians who do not belong to these ancient recognised sects are agnostic in faith. Is it possible to these, if they wish, to enrol as Congress Volunteers conscientiously and with full understanding of a pledge which begins in the name of an entity they ignore? If not, is it proper to exclude from Congress service any such merely because of their religious faith? May I suggest that a conscience clause be added to accommodate all such cases, allowing of solemn affirmation in place of the oath in the name of God (to which even some



believers in a personal God object, as the Quakers), or else a substitution of 'Conscience' in place of 'God' by all conscientious objectors to the use of the latter, or—best of all—that a solemn affirmation without reference to God and with or without 'Conscience' be required of *all* comers without distinction? I approach you as you are the author of that pledge and now the President of the Congress. I did so once before, but I am afraid, not in time for you to be able to attend to it before your historic arrest at Sabarmati in 1922.

So far as the conscientious objection is concerned the mention of God may be removed if required from the Congress pledge of which I am proud to think I was the author. Had such an objection been raised at the time, I would have yielded at once. I was unprepared for the objection in a place like India. Though there is officially the *Charvak* school, I do not know that it has any votaries. I deny that Buddhists and Jains are atheists or agnostics. The latter they cannot be. Those who believe in the soul as apart from and capable of life independent of and after the dissolution of the body cannot be called atheists. We may all have different definitions for 'God'. If we could all give our own definitions of God there would be as many definitions as there are men and women. But behind all that variety of definitions there would be also a certain sameness which would be unmistakable. For the root is one. God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know. Charles Bradlaugh described himself as an atheist no doubt but many a Christian declined to regard him as such. He recognised in Bradlaugh a greater kinship with himself than many a lip Christian. I had the privilege of attending the funeral of that good friend of India. I noticed several clergymen at the function. There were certainly several Mussalmans and many Hindus in the procession. They all believed in God. Bradlaugh's denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. His was an eloquent and indignant protest against the then current theology

and the terrible contrast between precept and practice. To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly. He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us: One may banish the word 'God' from the Congress but one has no power to banish the Thing itself. What is a solemn affirmation if it is not the same thing as in the name of God. And surely conscience is but a poor and laborious paraphrase of the simple combination of three letters called God. He cannot cease to be because heinous immoralities or inhuman brutalities are committed in his name. He is long suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. He metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbours—men and brutes. With Him ignorance is no excuse. And withal He is ever forgiving for He always gives us the chance to repent. He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us 'unfettered' to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of freewill leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for himself at our expense. Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport—*Lila*, or calls it all an illusion—*Maya*. We are *not*, He alone *Is*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi*—lute, and all would be well.

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*16th April, 1925*

## MY POSITION

BY M. K. GANDHI

It was for the first time and in Bombay that I heard, the other day, some complaint about my not having called a meeting of the A. I. C. C. A press reporter came to me and tackled me on the question to which he seemed to attach the highest importance. I could not understand his agitation for some minutes for I was innocent of any newspaper controversy on the subject. My innocent travelling has practically cut me off from the newspaper world. It was only when Mr. Shastri told me in Madras, some days after the event, that I knew Sir Abdur Rahim was superseded. I do not regret this gross ignorance of mine on current events. I know that I am apparently useless for making any impression on such events. I can show no immediate remedy for such ills as the supersession of Sir Abdur Rahim. My ignorance of current events, therefore, does not matter much. I must apply myself to preparing efficient non-violent self-sacrificing workers with a living faith in handspinning and Khaddar, Hindu-Muslim Unity and, if they are Hindus, in removal of untouchability also. For the current year at any rate, this is the national programme and no other.

I do not need to worry about the purely 'political' programme which the Congress has entrusted to the Swarajists who are an integral part of it. As a time economist I would be foolish if I bothered my head about things which with my eyes open and full trust I have handed over to a body of men who are at least as capable as myself, if not much more, in the domain which they have specially selected for themselves. It is enough for me to watch from a distance with admiration the valiant effort of Pandit Motilal Nehru in the Assembly, the brilliance of Deshbandhu who at the cost of his health pitted himself against an all-powerful Government and came out victorious each time the Government gave him battle, or the

marvellous cohesion of the Swarajists in the Central Provinces, or the courteous and almost unperceived encroachments of Mr. Jaykar. I would not insult these great workers by my officious and indifferent attention. I help them by my prayers for their success and by ceaseless effort to prepare the nation from within in the only manner I know.

I know of no division in the Congress ranks. I shall be party to no division. The Working Committee has a majority which does not wholly share my views. It is their duty to keep me straight. I shall never do a single thing during the the year which my precious colleagues do not endorse. I am in correspondence with them as to the advisability of holding a meeting of the Working Committee. I am anxious not to take their time unnecessarily. Similar considerations guide me in not worrying the A. I. C. C. It is a body which has to be summoned only for giving new directions or framing new programmes. There are no new directions to be given, no new programme to be settled. It is no light thing to bring from long distances nearly four hundred men, the majority of whom are poor and all of whom are or should be busy. I have, therefore, purposely refrained from convening the A. I. C. C. But if there is a large body of members who wish to have a meeting called, and if they would name the purpose, I would have it summoned without avoidable delay.

What is most necessary, however, is for Provinces to organise themselves. Their committees may meet frequently. We have practical provincial autonomy in the Congress. Let each Province honestly and industriously work the franchise. There seems to be a disposition to regard its failure as a forgone conclusion. Let me inform the pessimists and alarmists that the spinning movement is gaining, not losing, ground. There are workers all over India who are working at it silently, surely and effectively. The production and quality of Khaddar have considerably improved. Many interesting experiments are being made to make Khaddar cheaper and more durable. Tiruppur perhaps heads the list. But Tiruppur is only a sample of what

is going on. The Gujarat experiment has only just begun. It has in it immense potentialities. It is an attempt to reduce the price of Khaddar from nine annas to three annas per yard and at the same time to improve its quality. The indirect effect of the franchise has been already great. The direct effect depends upon the capacity and integrity of those who are working it. My advice to them is:

1. Canvass only for those who could spin themselves, but take in all who would bring their own yarn.
2. But be detached even regarding self-spinners. You must not pamper them. The franchise is a privilege. Those only are to be valued who will value the privilege and work to retain it.
3. Do not be disappointed if you have only a few members so long as they are true members.
4. Do not take money for yarn for you to convert it into yarn. Throw the burden of supplying the yarn on those who want to become members. You may open yarn depots for the sake of those who may want yarn. Let the Provincial Khaddar Boards undertake the supply of yarn.

Let me make my position clear. I am wedded to the three-fold programme. I cannot tease Hindu-Muslim Unity into life. It therefore requires no outward activity from me. As a Hindu I shall serve as many Mussalmans as will let me serve them. I shall advise those who seek my advice. For the rest, I cease to worry about what I cannot mend. But I have a living faith in unity coming. It must come even if it has to do so after a few pitched battles. If there are men who will fight, nobody on earth can prevent them.

Untouchability is doomed. It may take time. But the progress made is truly marvellous. It is more still in the thought world. But in action too one notices the effect everywhere. It was a glorious sight, the other day, to see in Mangrol not one of the ladies raising her hand against untouchables sitting side by side with them. And when they were actually brought in:

none of these brave women moved. It is not a solitary instance. But I know that there is a dark side to the picture. Hindus must unremittingly toil away at the reform. The larger the number of workers the more substantial the result.

But the most encouraging results are to be seen in spinning. It is spreading to the villages. I make bold to say that it is the most effective method of village reconstruction. There are thousands of women hungering to spin, because they want a few coppers to find them food. There are no doubt villages where the villagers do not need any supplementary income. I would not touch them for the time being. Just as I would not pamper self-spinners for the franchise, so would I not pamper spinners for money. They must spin if they need, not otherwise. The greatest difficulty in the way of workers is to induce men and women to spin or to do any other work even though they need some work. They either live on charity or are content to starve to death. There are millions in India who have lost all interest in life. We can only teach them by ourselves spinning. I am interested in producing the spinning atmosphere. When many people do a particular thing, it produces a subtle unperceivable effect which pervades the surroundings and which proves infectious. I want that atmosphere so that the idle hands I have described will be irresistibly drawn to the wheel. They will be so drawn when they see people spinning who do not need to. Hence the franchise.

But if the congress workers do not wish to take part in the work, let them revise the programme next year. I shall resolutely refrain from any fight next year either. I shall swear by the franchise even if only a few spin to become members. But I have no desire to retain my hold of the Congress by mechanical means. I simply state my limitations. I cannot work at the reforms without any power behind. That power can only come by organising the people either for violence or non-violence. I can only try to organise them for non-violence or fail. There is no indication of failure yet. There is every hope of success. Organisation for non-violence means giving villagers remuneration.

ative work to do and inducing them to give up some of their bad habits and to bring into being consciousness of one nationality by making untouchables proud of their Hinduism and bringing Hindus, Mussalmans and others to believe in and to work for the common cause with a full heart. I have no aptitude for any other work along political lines till the three things are done. I am as keen as the tallest among us to establish Swaraj at the earliest moment. I am as impatient of wrong as the most ardent patriot. But I recognise the nation's limitations. I must work according to my lights to remove those limitations. It may be a long and dreary route but I know that it will be found to be the shortest. But all need not think alike, do not think alike. If there is an overwhelming body of opinion in the country that requires a change of methods and change of the franchise even during the current year they can have it if they can ensure a full house of the A. I. C. C. and secure an overwhelming majority. Though it may be a straining of the Congress constitution I will not stand in the way of a vast majority of the members of the A. I. C. C., altering even the constitution. The A. I. C. C. can take such a drastic step if its urgency can be demonstrated and an overwhelming majority demand it. But if there is nothing to warrant such a change, then it behoves every one of us to rivet our attention to the franchise without interfering with the Swarajist part of the Congress activity in any shape or form. Half an hour to be honestly given by every Congressman and Congresswoman to the wheel and whole time to its organising by those who have an aptitude for it, is not an exorbitant demand for the national cause.

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*30th April, 1925*

## QUANTITY vs. QUALITY

BY M. K. GANDHI

There is at the present moment a note of despondency in the air over the number of Congress members. The complaint is that the members have been never so few as today. The complaint would be reasonable if the franchise being the same the response was less than before. It would also be reasonable, if the influence of the Congress was to be measured by the number of members. Opinions would undoubtedly differ as to the measure to be applied for gauging the Congress influence. For me there is one measure. I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity, the more so for Indian conditions. In the midst of suspicion, discord, antagonistic interests, superstition, fear, distrust and the like there is not only no safety in numbers but there may be even danger in them. Who does not know how often numbers have embarrassed us during the past four years? Numbers become irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are a self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull.

I am convinced that there is safety in fewness so long as we have not evolved cohesion, exactness and intelligent co-operation and responsiveness. One virtuous son is better than one hundred loafers. Five Pandavas were more than a match for one hundred Kauravas. A disciplined army of a few hundred picked men has time without number routed countless undisciplined hordes. A few members fully satisfying the Congress test can give a good account of themselves, whereas one million members nominally on the Congress register may not be worth the register itself. I do not for one moment suggest that those whom we have now on the register are sound or even sounder than those whom we had before. That can only be verified at the end of the year.



What I would like to drive home is that we should know what we want. Do we believe in the paramount value of the spinning wheel? Then we must adopt it whether we are few or many. Do we believe in the necessity, in terms of Swaraj, of removing the curse of untouchability? Then we may not surrender, though we may be overwhelmed. Do we regard Hindu-Muslim unity as absolutely necessary for the attainment of Swaraj? Then we must stake much to achieve it. We may not be satisfied with a sham. We must have the real coin or none.

'But these are not politics. There is no giving battle to the Government in all this' say some friends. My answer is we cannot give effective battle to the Government till we achieve these things. 'But we shall never achieve any single one of these things till we attain Swaraj' say others. I answer that we must evolve the ability to achieve these things notwithstanding Government indifference or opposition, secret or open. Achievement of these things to me means half the battle, if not the whole of it.

'What then of the Swarajist programme?' Say they. That programme must go on side by side with the development of internal strength. The Swarajists are an integral part of the Congress. They are able, they are on the alert, they will shape their policy in accordance with the exigencies of the situation. Let those who have the aptitude prosecute that programme as well. But let them not forget the internal work. If twelve thousand men and women, nay two thousand men and women, can be induced vigorously to work the constructive programme, things will immediately wear a different aspect. Throughout my wanderings, I have noticed a lamentable dearth of workers brave, honest, self-sacrificing, self-reliant and with confidence in themselves and the mission. The harvest is indeed rich but the labourers are few.

Sjt. Srinivas Aiyengar and I were attending a meeting in Madras. People were bubbling with enthusiasm. We were driving to keep time for another meeting. But my 'admirers' insisted on exhibiting me through a street which was not on

the programme. He pleaded, I pleaded, want of time. Sjt. Aiyengar pleaded on behalf of my health. It was all to no purpose. We were driven!—shall I say compulsorily? Both of us realised that these men were no help to the cause, they were a positive hindrance. Things were set right only when I took the law in my hands, declined to be driven, actually got out of the car and defied the crowd to carry me bodily if they wished. Here there was an ocular demonstration of danger in numbers. I can cite a score of such experiences. The people are well-meaning but ignorant and thoughtless. How many well-meaning mothers drug their children to death?

We want not excitement at the present moment but calm constructive work. It is a laborious task, it is stupendous. But it is not beyond our capacity. It need not even take time. What hinders progress is indefiniteness. The verbal assent without practical performance embarrasses. I plead for quality and quality alone. I must therefore refuse to trouble the All-India Congress Committee unless I receive a requisition to summon it. The present programme has been framed to arrive at the requisite quality. And so long as it remains, I can but advise every Congress worker to put his or her whole soul into its working so that we might have, at the end of the year, if it is at all possible, a compact body of men and women possessing the requisite qualifications, be the number ever so small.

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*7th May, 1925*

## ILLUMINATING DOCUMENTS

BY M. K. GANDHI

These notes are being written during the trying journey to Calcutta. This being my first passage through the Central Provinces after my discharge from prison, people are embarrassingly attentive at every station and there is no rest for the wearied limbs. The discarding of Khaddar is most noticeable.

Instead of a forest of white Khaddar caps, I see everywhere the provoking black foreign caps on almost every head. A friend sadly remarked to me that there was hardly one in a thousand who wear khaddar habitually. I am witnessing all along the route a striking demonstration of the fact. All honour then to the one per thousand who remain faithful to Khaddar against heavy odds. My faith in Khaddar rises as I find this indifference to if not revolt against Khaddar.

The demonstration of the painful truth became complete at Nagpur--the centre that re-affirmed the Calcutta resolution of non-violent Non-co-operation. There was a vast crowd at the station. The Congress officials had even arranged a meeting just outside the station. The hot sun was beating overhead. The din was terrific. Nobody heard anybody, much less listened to anybody. There were volunteers but there was no discipline. No way was kept for me to pass through. I insisted on a way--being made if I was to go to the meeting place during the half hour that the train was to stop at the station. The way was made with difficulty. I waded through it in the best manner I could. It took me over five minutes to reach the platform. Without the crowd pressing from all sides, I could have reached it in half a minute. I took no more than one minute to deliver my message. It took me longer to return to the train than it took to reach the platform, for the crowd had now lost its head completely. The intoxication of affection was now at its height. The shouts of '---kijai' rent the sky. I was ill able to bear the din and the dust and the suffocation. 'O God! deliver me from this affection' was the silent prayer that went up to the Great White Throne. I reached the train in safety. It was provokingly late going. I stood in the doorway wishing and hoping to talk to the crowd if it would keep still for a while. The Congress officials tried, a big Akali tried, to silence the crowd. It was no use. It had come not listen to me. It had come to have *darshan*. That it was having with delirious joy. Its joy was my pain. My name on the lips and black caps on the heads,--what a terrible contrast! What a lie! I could not

fight the battle of Swaraj with that crowd. And yet I know that Maulana Shaukat Ali would say there was hope so long as there was that affection, blind though it was. I am not so sure and therefore I was in agony.

At last I got a hearing. I demanded the black caps. The response was instantaneous but not generous. From that vast crowd I do not think more than one hundred caps were thrown, four of which were thrown not by the owners. They were claimed and promptly returned. This sight had a double lesson for me. With proper organised work, people could be induced to discard foreign or mill made cloth. That was one lesson; but there was another. People there were who yet ready to remove the neighbour's cap, just the preliminary to coercion. But there should be no coercion in Khaddar wearing or in any thing else. Those who wear it must do so voluntarily or not at all.

But the most illuminating information was given to me by the documents that the business-like officials had prepared for presentation to me. The documents tell me a truthful, simple, unvarnished story of Congress work. One paper contains information about P. C. C. activities. In March last it had a membership of 204 of which 114 were self-spinners and 90 gave yarn spun by others. In April the membership fell to 132, self-spinners being 80 and the others 52. Thus there was a big drop among both the classes in one month. What it will now be remains to be seen. The Committee reports 4 national schools in the province and donation of Rs. 5,000 from the trustees of the late Harishanker Vyas for untouchables. A sub-committee has been appointed to draft a scheme for the uplift of the untouchables. The paper mentions that thanks to the effort of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the Hindus and Muslims 'have been maintaining very peaceful relations with one another'.

The second paper is a summary report of Congress activities in the city of Nagpur. It states that in the August of 1924 there were 1,133 members. In March 1925 the figures were :

A	B	Total
37	70	107
In April they were :		
A	B	Total
29	30	59

In one month the defaulters were 48

Number of spinning wheels working is 'about' 40. The average output of yarn is 60 to 70 thousand yards per month. Average counts are 10 to 14. No looms work with handspun yarn.

There is one Khaddar shop with an average sale of Rs. 500 per month.

The report says 'no information can be given about drink and opium' and then this extraordinarily brief and truthful statement ends thus :

"The above given figures in Congress membership fairly show the future of the spinning franchise. The self-spinning members come mostly from the no-change section of the Congress. The B class members are mainly from the Swaraj party. Not a single Swarajist is a self-spinner. Out of the five members from this Nagar who hold seats on the A. I. C. C. only one is a self-spinner ; one has regularly paid his quota of purchased yarn ; two are defaulters and one has even failed to pay his quota for March and is no longer a member of the Congress. Some of those who hold seats on the P. C. C. are also found to be in defaulters' list and some of them hold responsible positions in the P. C. C. This will show how far the franchise is workable. The no-change section, which has faith in spinning and Khaddar, is gradually weakening and is at present limited to individuals. The Swarajists of Nagpur are anxious to throw off the franchise and so is the centrist or the independent party which at present holds the P. C. C.

"A ray of hope :—Generally people (common people) look with love and respect at those who spin regularly and who have sacrificed their careers for the Congress work.

“Some of the causes of the slack work :—

(a) Want of organisation in the workers who have faith in the franchise.

(b) Want of sympathy in big Congress leaders for the franchise and infirmness of the originator of the franchise to maintain it against all odds. Even the workers in the no-change party have come to believe that the franchise is going to be repealed at the next session of the Congress and this has taken away all the enthusiasm in them for any patient and effective work.

“Anti-Propaganda :—Most of the congress and public speakers lay greater stress on other matters and point out the weak points about the franchise and scrupulously avoid saving anything in its favour. And this cannot be counteracted for fear of creating controversy which is sure to lead to unhealthy atmosphere and in which no support can be expected from Mahatma Gandhi.”

I note the gentle rebuke administered to me for my ‘infirmness to maintain it (the spinning franchise) against all odds.’ But let me tell the authors of the report that I will maintain it against all odds for myself. But if I have a spark of the democratic spirit in me, I cannot maintain it for the Congress. That must be left to the Congress members. The responsibility must be joint and several. Why should those who believe in the franchise, *i.e.* in hand-spinning, for the nation, not maintain it all the more when others are lukewarm? And supposing that the Congress next year alters the franchise, what will the believers do? Will they leave off spinning? Or are they going to spin for themselves and vicariously for others also?

The authors of the report are right when they say that I would “lend no support to controversy that is ‘sure to lead to unhealthy atmosphere’”. But if anyone is luke-warm, the way to counteract the lukewarmness is not to talk about or against it but to go one’s way and organise what one believes in. Who can prevent those who believe spinning from organising it? Let me inform the authors of the report that there have sprung

up in the country silent workers who are spreading the message of the wheel effectively and unostentatiously.

There are still two more documents for me to refer to among the batch that was handed to me at Nagpur. The third is the report on Tilak Vidyalaya. This institution started with 1,000 students and over 40 teachers in 1921. This grand number fell to 150 in 1923-24. In July 1924 it was reduced to 55. Now it is 45 with 8 teachers. Spinning had been dropped. It has now been re-introduced. Carpentry, book-binding, tailoring, etc. are taught in this institution. The total monthly expenses are Rs. 355. The income is Rs. 180, including fees. They had a windfall in the shape of a legacy of Rs. 5,000 from the estate of the late Harishanker Vyas of Betul.

The Vidyalaya is said to give religious instruction and physical training.

They need Rs. 1,000 as capital for their technical department and Rs. 10,000 to enable them to run the school for six years.

The story of the fact of this Vidyalaya is about the story of almost every other national school in the country. Disheartening as the story may appear in the reading, there is no occasion to lose heart. If the teachers are determined, competent and self-sacrificing, they can make their small institutions effective and useful from the national standpoint. Numbers are valueless if they do not satisfy the required test, whatever it may be. If the teachers of the Nagpur Tilak Vidyalaya have grit in them and can satisfy the Congress test I do not think they will have difficulty in finding financial support. I know of no institution that has died for want of financial backing. I know many that have died for want of the requisite quality among the teachers.

I have reserved the most hopeful document to the last. It is a list of those who spun yarn for presentation to me apart from their quota for membership. The list has 41 names of which two are institutions. Therefore there were more than 41 individual spinners. I find in the list Maharashtris and

Marwadis. I find also four Parsis, one Muslim and four ladies. The list gives the yards and the weight and the counts spun against every name. The length spun is 753974 yards. The counts range from 96 to 6. I have not yet examined the yarn. But if all of it is weavable, it is a quantity to be proud of. And if all these members have an independent living faith in hand-spinning I should not despair of success within a reasonable distance of time.

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*7th May, 1925*

### SPLITTING HAIRS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A well-known Congressman for whom I have great regard and who prides himself on being a disciplinarian was found the other day not being wholly dressed in Khaddar. I thought that he was fully dressed in Khaddar. But the friends who lived in the same town with him knew better and asked me to persuade this friend to respect the Congress resolution. The friend frankly admitted that all the articles of his clothing were not made of Khaddar, but said that in having come to me he was not on Congress work. This was a hair splitter for which I was wholly unprepared especially from a disciplinarian. I enjoyed no private relations with him. He came to discuss with me public affairs and therefore I thought that in coming to see me he had come on Congress or public work. But the friend held otherwise and said that he came to see me not on Congress business. I told him such hair-splitting distinctions delayed the advent of Swaraj. The Congress resolution in my opinion provides for exceptional circumstances in which Khaddar dress may be dispensed with without the wearer forfeiting his membership. It does not absolve members from the natural obligation to wear Khaddar on all occasions. If men at the top resort to fine distinctions for not wearing Khaddar, it is impos-



sible for the common folk to conform to the Khaddar dress unless it becomes cheaper and more easily available than foreign calico. They expect the leaders to go the whole length in order to enable them to go a quarter.

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*21st May, 1925*

### A REMARKABLE ADDRESS

BY M. K. GANDHI

In the majority of cases addresses presented to me contain adjectives which I am ill able to carry. Their use can do good neither to the writers nor to me. They unnecessarily humiliate me, for I have to confess that I do not deserve them. When they are deserved, their use is superfluous. It cannot add to the strength of the qualities possessed by me. They may, if I am not on my guard, easily turn my head. The good that a man does is more often than not, better left unsaid. Imitation is the sincerest flattery. I commend it, therefore, to the attention of all admirers. If it is my spinning they like, let them admire it by doing it themselves; if it is my regularity they appreciate, let them flatter me by being regular themselves. And if it is my truthfulness and non-violence they treasure, let them show their appreciation by their conduct.

But not all the addresses contain a mere recital of my praises. On rare occasions they give me valuable information. A Chandpur address was remarkable for a frank expression of its limitations. The address does contain some reference to my qualities imaginary or real; but the greatest part of it is devoted to a catalogue of the activities of the inhabitants of Chandpur. Here is the catalogue:

"1. Number of Congress members--Class "A" 10, class "B" 68, total--78.

2. Number of spinning-wheels working--245.

3. Average capacity of each wheel--100 yds. per hour, the highest speed being--500 yds. per hour.

4. Average count—12, the highest being 152.
5. Monthly output of yarn—1 maund.
6. Number of looms working with hand-spun and other yarn—More than one thousand. Only seven looms produce pure khadi.
7. Monthly output of pure khadi—250 yds.
8. Number of khaddar depots—3 only.
9. Average monthly consumption of khadi—Worth 300 rupees.
10. Total number of national schools 4,—total number of students being 167.

As regards liquor traffic it has been gradually increasing since 1922."

Then follows an interesting commentary on most of the items. It is wound up as follows:

"We feel we will be failing in our obvious duty, if we do not allude to the terrible poverty and consequent mortality rampant amongst the people of the country. They are simply groaning under heavy indebtedness. The balance-sheet of most of them indicates the hopeless condition of utter bankruptcy. This state of things brought about by the total annihilation of the cottage industries often leads to serious crimes and we shudder to conceive the final result of this economic depression of the people."

The record is certainly not a proud one. But there is nothing here to despair of. We, each one of us, can but do our best. We do not, cannot control results which depend upon so many other circumstances. We may feel quite at ease, when we have done our real best. Unfortunately in the majority of cases, we do no work or do it indifferently and still complain of poverty of results. All is well if we have done the best that is possible for us to do.

Truly, the problems that face us are enormous and many. For one man or many to presume to tackle them all at once is to arrogate omnipotence. Any such attempt is foredoomed to failure. Our difficulties are aggravated because we are a subject

nation. Many can be remedied if we were not. But it is equally true that we shall not come to our own unless we tackle as many now. Not to handle them till Swaraj is obtained is to postpone both Swaraj and the solution of the problems. He, therefore, who handles the main problems to the best of his ability helps their solution and brings Swaraj nearer.

If, then, the workers in Chandpur have exerted their utmost, results shown by them need not be considered discouraging. Time must work in their favour, for it always does in favour of honest and industrious workers. Better to have even 10 "A" class members than none, and for me, it is any day better to have 10 working members than to have ten thousand members who will pay four annas per year and then no more think about the Congress than miss their four annas. The ten, if they will remain faithful to their trust will soon convert themselves into one hundred. I know no alternative to the wheel. Those who do must set it up. Till then the ten who work the wheel must hold the field undaunted.

But my fear is that the organisers have not worked sufficiently strenuously. I discovered that there were nearly 120 volunteers in Chandpur. Now of these nearly 100 knew how to spin but hardly five or six spun daily. One of the resolutions makes spinning by volunteers obligatory. And if a volunteer does not strictly respect the franchise resolution, who else will? The Reception Committee should have been strict in the choice of its volunteers. If it could not get enough properly qualified men, it should have managed its work with a few. An unskilled surgeon is worse than no surgeon. An indifferent volunteer is often a hindrance than a help. Let me note in passing that the volunteers were extremely good to me. They served to their utmost. But I want not personal service and attachment precious as both are; I want national service and national attachment. I want strictest devotion to duty and scrupulous fulfilment of all obligations imposed and accepted.

The address mentions increase in the liquor traffic. It is a serious thing and may be dealt with by workers who will

specially dedicate themselves to the reform. But I fear that liquor traffic is one of those things which can be brought under effective control only by prohibition.

The concluding commentary is a statement of our general condition. Revival of the cottage industry, and not cottage industries, will remove the growing poverty. When once we have revived the one industry, all the other industries will follow. They will add to the country's wealth. But the wheel alone can solve the general problem of starvation. Each district has no doubt its varying wants. They must have attention. But I would make the spinning wheel the foundation on which to build a sound village life, I would make the wheel the centre round which all the other activities will revolve. No spinner enters the village life without coming in contact with and helping to solve the other problem that tax the villagers. But if a worker enters a village and takes up any activity that comes his way and not the wheel, he will miss the central point and therefore simply grope without reaching every villager.

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*4th June, 1927*

## A BASELESS CHARGE

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have heard the charge that the Congressmen *i. e.* Swarajists killed the Charkha in Bengal. It is a baseless charge. In the first place the Charkha is not killed in Bengal. In the second place, whatever set-back the movement might have received, it is not due to the Swarajists any more than it is due to any other party. Let me here acknowledge that the Swarajists have everywhere co-operated to make the Charkha demonstrations a success. They have taken part in organising them and also in spinning. Some Swarajists are out and out enthusiasts with their whole families. I have already written about my host in Faridpur. His wife and his children were devotees or

the wheel. They supply the yarn for the Khaddar required for the family use. The wife of Sit. Basant Kumar Mazumdar is also an enthusiast. She organised a big demonstration at Comilla. Jogen Babu of Dinajpur is himself a regular spinner and it was a treat to watch the whole of his family spinning dexterously. Indeed the best spinning demonstration of the tour was at Dinajpur. I could multiply such instances. What is true is that the Swarajists do not pin their whole faith to the Charkha as, say, I do. Of this they have made no secret. They would not enter the Councils if they believed wholly and solely in the constructive programme. Their position is incredibly simple. They believe in the constructive programme including the Charkha. They believe, too, that without it Swaraj cannot be obtained. But they also believe it to be necessary to capture the Councils and all representative or semi-representative institutions through which pressure can be exerted upon the Government. This is an honest attitude at which there can be nothing to cavil. And the Bengal Swarajists at any rate are in my opinion living up to their faith.

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*4th June, 1925*

### CORRUPTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

Whilst I am discussing the doings of the Swarajists I would like to advert to the charge of corruption brought against them. Some distinguished public men came to me and warned me against playing into the hands of the Swarajists and urged me to use my influence to purify the political life of Bengal. I told the gentlemen that I had no reason to believe the charges they were making, but that, if they would give me chapter and verse and be prepared to substantiate them, I would gladly investigate and, if I found them to be true, I

should have no hesitation in denouncing the party. I told them, too, that I had heard of these charges before and that I had brought them to the notice of Deshbandhu Das who had assured me that there was no truth in them, and that if my informants could produce names and specific charges, he, Deshbandhu, was perfectly willing to have them investigated. The gentlemen told me that the belief about corruption was common property, but that it was not always possible to give legal proof. I told them that in that case we must follow the golden rule of not believing what could not be proved. If we did not follow the rule, no public man's reputation would be safe.

After this interview I had forgotten all about the charges. Hardayal Babu, however, returned to the charge with double fury at Chandpur. But I could not treat his denunciation seriously, nor did he expect me to. Although he and I belong to the same school, our methods of looking public men and activities are different. Behind my non-co-operation there is always the keenest desire to co-operate on the slightest pretext even with the worst of opponents. To me, a very imperfect mortal, ever in need of God's grace, no one is beyond redemption. Behind Hardayal Babu's non-co-operation there is fierce distrust and disinclination for reverting to co-operation. He wants mighty signs whereas a mere gesture suffices me.

But I had the charge repeated in an unexpected quarter. I pricked up my ears and became serious. I began a little gentle inquiry. I was, however, relieved on my reaching Calcutta by Babu Nalini Sircar, the chief whip of the Swaraj party, Babu Nirmal Chandra, Babu Tireshekhar Ray and Babu Hirendra Nath Das Gupta, coming to me and offering unasked to answer any questions I might have about the Swaraj Party's doings in any matter whatsoever. I thereupon mentioned all the charges I had heard. They were able to give me complete satisfaction about them and invited me to investigate further and even to inspect their books. But I told them that I could not possibly inspect their books unless there was more authentic information about the charges. As it was, I had nothing

beyond unsupported allegations. They assured me that there was not a vestige of truth in the charge of bribery and corruption.

I appeal to those who are ready to make charges to be chary of believing the stories that may be brought before them, regarding their adversaries. Do we not know the Government has been badly sold by its informants? Do they not know that even Ranade and Gokhale were shadowed for a long time? Do they not know what scandals were talked about the late Sir Pherozeshaw and even Sir Surendranath Banerjee? Even the G. O. M. was not beyond the reach of calumny. A gentleman in London once gave me such details that he at least required me to approach the great patriot whom I worshipped. Well, I did approach him with trembling and fear. I sat down at his feet and I remember the occasion as I looked into his benign face and pleadingly asked whether what was said to be could be true. It was a garret which the G. O. M. was occupying as his office in Brixton. I shall never forget the scene. I came away knowing that the charge brought against him was a simple calumny. What would happen to me if I were to believe all I have been told about the 'selfishness and perfidy' of the Ali Brothers whom I believe to be above corruption and perfidy? There are enough differences to divide us, but why accentuate them by giving a ready ear to every charge of baseness brought against opponents? I find enough justification for honest differences. Let us then honour our opponents for the same honesty of purpose and patriotic motive that we claim for ourselves. One gentleman who spoke about the so-called Swarajist corruption was candid enough to tell me that in spite of it all there was no other leader in Bengal but Chittaranjan Das. There is room enough for all to serve. There is no room for jealousy when all wish to serve. I believe in trusting. Trust begets trust. Suspicion is foetid and only stinks. He who trusts has never yet lost in the world. A suspicious man is lost to himself and the world. Let those who have made of non-violence a creed beware of suspecting opponents. Suspi-

cion is of the brood of violence. Non-violence cannot but trust. I must at any rate, refuse to believe anything against anybody, much less against my honoured fellow-workers, unless I have absolute proof. But Hardayal Babu will say, 'Do you want us to disbelieve the testimony of our eyes and ears? I say, yes and no. I have known people whose eyes and ears have deceived them. They see and hear only what they would like to see and hear. To them I say, 'do not believe even your eyes and ears when you have unbiassed testimony to the contrary.' But there are others who have seen, heard and known but has not been able to impart the truth to others. They must persist in their belief even though the whole world may be against them. Only before them I shall plead for; little toleration for those like me, who, in spite of their desire to see the pure truth, fail to see it in the light the others see. I am yet unconvinced about the corruption ascribed to the Swarajists. And those who believe the contrary must bear with me till they convince me.

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*18th June, 1925*

## ARE WE READY ?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Mr. Bharucha has made a public appeal to me to call an All-parties Conference again because in his opinion time is now favourable for it. Deshbandhu Das has placed in my hands a copy of the *Mahratta* in which also I observe a similar appeal. I am aware that Sarojini Devi holds similar views. But my position is much the same on this suggestion as on that of calling an A. I. C. C. meeting. If I get a requisition say from Mr. Jinnah, Sir Mohmad Shafi, Pandit Mudan Mohan Malaviyaji, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mr. Srinivas Sastri, Sir Surendra Nath, the orthodox Non-Brahmin leaders, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Dr. Sapru and others, I shall gladly convene the conference. Personally I think that we are not more ready today for coming together than we were in Delhi. If it is about Swaraj that we are



to meet we shall quarrel over the Hindu-Muslim question. If it is about getting all parties on the Congress platform, then the A. I. C. C. is the proper body first to consider or devise new plans. For unless the present Congressmen are fairly united in the desire and the plan of execution, a general conference must prove futile. If it is the spinning franchise alone that stands in the way the method is simpler still. The original party to the franchise pact should first consider the suggestion to revise it. They are the Swaraj Party—not the individual Swarajists—and myself. The pact was between the party and myself, representing no party but still representing an indefinite number of men holding my views. I want to do nothing in the Congress without the consent of the Swaraj Party. If that party, therefore, desires a revision of the franchise, it can have it even now for the asking, so far as I am concerned. And when the party has made up its minds, the A. I. C. C. meeting can be called to give effect to its desires. I regard myself as nothing in the Congress. I admit that I do not carry educated India with me in my views on spinning as on several other things. Educated Indians brought the Congress into being and they must dominate and shape its policy. I feel that I represent the mass mind however inadequately it may be. But I want to act upon the Congress only indirectly by carrying conviction to individuals by argument and facts,—not by taking votes which might be given for considerations not based on merits. So long as the masses do not think for themselves and are likely to be swayed by those who, for the time being, exercise influence on them, it will be wrong to use their votes. If, therefore, the Swaraj Party, which undoubtedly represents the bulk of educated India, desires to reject the spinning franchise, it can do so to-day without any opposition from me. Only, then it will be improper to expect me to lead the Congress. I am unfit just now for any other work but that of the triple constructive programme. For me success in it is Swaraj and Swaraj without it is an impossibility. I must, therefore, make room for those who take what has been called a broader view of things.

Mr. Deshmukh is said to have suggested that I should retire from public life if I cannot revise my views. I have not seen his Satara address. But if he has said so, I think he had a perfect right to do so. I would say the same thing of one who, I may think, was, by his activity, doing harm to the country. Did not all non-co-operators call upon councillors to resign? Mr. Deshmukh may be wrong, but his right to correct a public man may not be questioned; nor has he said anything strange or new. Indeed, there was a time when I seriously thought of retiring, but I found that it was no use. I believe with Maulana Mahomed Ali that a public man may not give up his trust so long as he believes in it. He must be relieved of it. He said that if I retired prematurely I would be putting an undue strain upon political opponents and on the country. I must cease to be popular before I could retire in spite of confidence in my message. And even then it often becomes a point of extreme delicacy to decide between persistence and withdrawal. The fact is, retirement at the bidding of another from service voluntarily taken up is not so simple as it may appear. But Mr. Deshmukh has courageously paved the way for the public to think out the question. Those who would have me to leave the field should at least create public opinion against my methods and views which they regard as unsound. My Mahatmaship is no passport for the currency of bad coin.

But the Charkha is no bad coin for me. I have faith in it to defend it against the whole world. I want freedom for all. I can think of it only in non-violent terms. If we are to get our freedom by strictly non-violent means, we can get it only through the Charkha which necessarily includes Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and several other things which I need not mention here. In my opinion, the Congress will commit a terrible mistake if it abolishes the franchise. But my belief in democracy is worth nothing if it does not include the right to commit even terrible mistakes. I, therefore, know that my belief, though right in my estimation, must be rejected if the others do not feel it within them. I want a living faith

in the Charkha and consequent active co-operation. Mere mechanical assent without corresponding action can do no good to anybody. And in coming to a conclusion on the subject my personality must be dismissed from consideration. No man is indispensable for the evolution of this great and ancient land of *Dharma*. Let India live though a hundred Gandhis have to perish.

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*25th June, 1925*

### HUMBLER PRIDE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The General Secretary to the Congress writes :

"I am sorry that I made a mistake in the membership chart sent to you on the 16th. The last month's total for Burma should be 75 instead of 70. But the Burma P.C.C. in furnishing this later figure 75 has given no details under classes A and B.

"It will be noticed from the chart under reference that only 6 out of 20 provinces furnished information during the current month. Kerala never sent any at all. For the remaining 13 provinces last month's figures only are available. Adding the last month's totals for these 13 and the current month's figures for the 6 provinces the grand total of membership comes to 15,355."

I reproduce this letter not merely for the sake of the correction but for confessing my failure to command discipline even in such a simple matter as the getting of monthly returns. I used to talk at Belgaum of being exacting in enforcing discipline. I see that I have failed to secure the co-operation of the provincial committees. The Congress constitution provides no sanction against recalcitrant committees. Even if it did, I should be loath to enforce it. But though my pride is humbled, I must still plead and hope.

Will the committees please wake up to a sense of their duty and respond to the request of the General Secretary for returns?

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*16th July, 1925*

AT DARJEELING

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have almost promised the reader the sacred recollections of the five days I had with Deshabandhu at Darjeeling. I have called them among the most precious in my life. As time passes, the preciousness increases. I must tell the reader why. Though I had lived under Deshabandhu's roof before, ours was then a purely political meeting. We were both engrossed in our own allotted tasks. But in Darjeeling it was different. I had Deshabandhu wholly to myself. He was resting and I had gone solely to have communion with him. My going to Darjeeling for rest was a mere excuse. But for Deshabandhu's presence there I would not have gone in spite of the attraction of the snowy range. But in one of his pencil notes, which he had lately taken to writing to me, he said, 'Remember, you are under my jurisdiction. I am Chairman of a reception Committee. You have to include Darjeeling in your tour. This is a command'. I wish I had kept these sweet notes of his, but, alas! they have gone the way hundreds of such documents in my possession have gone. I pleaded that I had the Working Committee to take. 'Then bring the whole Committee. I shall arrange for their accommodation. The B. P. C. C. shall pay the fares of the members. I am wiring to Satcour accordingly', was his telegraphic reply. I was unable to take the Working Committee to Darjeeling but I promised to go as soon after that meeting as possible. And so I went. I had gone there for only two days. He kept me with him for five. He got Basanti Devi to ask Sjt. Phookan to postpone the Assam tour and himself postponed the Bengal

tour by three days. I am mentioning these details to show the eagerness we had to be with each other. As it has turned out, Deshabandhu's approaching long sleep was preparing us for a close communion.

He was on a convalescent if not on a sick bed. He had need to be taken care of. But he insisted on attending to every detail regarding my comfort and that of my companions. His appointments must be on a lavish scale. He had ordered five goats to be brought from the plains. He would not have me miss my milk for a single meal. I had often come under Basanti Devi's sisterly care, but at Darjeeling I was the object of Deshabandhu's personal attention. Nor was there any artificiality about it. Hospitality was the badge of his clan. He related several striking anecdotes about their lavish hospitality. It was at Darjeeling that I came to know his great regard for strangers or political opponents. At his instance Satish Babu of Khadi Pratishthan was sent for to discuss with him the plan we had settled of working hand-spinning and Khaddar in Bengal. I asked him where he would like Satish Babu to stay. 'Of course in this house' he said, 'But we are over-crowded here' I said. 'Certainly not. He can have my room for that matter' was the retort. Whilst I was thinking of him and his over-worked partner, he thought of Satish Babu's comfort. 'Besides' he said, 'I know that Satish Babu thinks I am prejudiced against him. He is a comparative stranger to me. You know that I do not worry about my other friends. They cannot misunderstand me. Satish Babu must stay in this house.'

We talked of different political groups in Bengal and incidentally I told him of the charges of bribery and corruption brought against the Swaraj party. I mentioned to him the fact that Sir Surendra Nath had invited me to go to his house again before leaving Bengal. He said, 'Do go and tell him all about our conversations and my emphatic denial of all charges of bribery and corruption. I am prepared to retire from public life if one such charge against the party can be proved to be

true. The fact is that Bengal political life is one of mutual jealousy and back-biting. The phenomenal rise and success of the Swaraj Party have become unbearable to some people. I want you, therefore, thoroughly to go into all the charges that may be brought against the party and give your considered judgment. I assure you I do not believe in dishonesty any more than you do. I know that my country cannot be free by dishonest means. You will be rendering a distinct service if you can bring all the parties together or at least rid the air of mutual recrimination. You should specially speak to Shyam Babu and Suresh Babu. Why do they not come to me if they distrust or suspect anything? We may hold different views but we need not swear at each other'. 'What about a similar charge against *Forward*? I do not know, because I do not read these newspapers: but I have heard complaints of that nature against *Forward* also.' I interposed. 'Yes *Forward* may have been guilty. You know that I do not write for or supervise *Forward* as you do in case of *Young India*. But if people will bring such things to my notice I will gladly investigate and set matters right. You will, I think, find *Forward* always on the defensive. but one may cross the boundary line even in putting up a defence. As you know I am investigating a serious case of unpardonable exaggeration in *Forward* if the facts are as they have been put before me. I assure you I have written most strongly about it. I have even sent for the writer.' Thus the conversation went on. I found throughout it all, a scrupulous care about justice to opponents and an honourable meeting of all parties.

'What do you say to convening an All-Parties meeting, or, as Mr. Kelkar suggests it of the All-India Congress Committee? I asked. 'I do not want it at present' he replied. The A.I.C.C. is useless, because we Swarajists must play the game and give the fullest trial to the new franchise. I tell you I am more and more coming round to your position about the Charkha. I am afraid we have not played the game everywhere. Here in Bengal, as you have said, you had no opposition from any party. But had I not been laid up I would have shown

the Charkha to be a swinging success. I tell you I intended to work the Charkha whole-heartedly and I wanted you to help me in the organisation; but as you see I have been helpless. No revision can take place this year. On the contrary we must all give the new franchise the fairest trial. I am going to write to the Maharashtra friends about it.'

Of the proposed All-Parties Conference he said, 'We must not have the conference just yet. I expect big things from Lord Birkenhead. He is a strong man and I like strong men. He is not as bad as he speaks. If we hold the meeting we must say something on the situation. I do not want to embarrass him by pitching our demands higher than he may be prepared to grant at the present moment. I do not want to disappoint him by understating our demands. We must watch and wait. We can lose nothing by so doing. If his statement is not satisfactory that may be the time for calling a meeting of all parties to decide upon a common course of action.' This was to me a novel reason for not convening the proposed meeting, so I said, 'I shall not call the meeting unless you and Motilalji want it or unless I get a representative requisition. But I must confess to you that I do not share your faith. Look at the Hindu-Muslim differences which are widening. Contemplate the Brahmin and non-Brahmin quarrels. See the political parties in Bengal. We have apparently never been so weak as now. And don't you agree with me that Englishmen have never conceded anything to weakness? I feel that we must make ourselves irresistible before we may expect anything big from England.' Deshabandhu became impatient and said, 'you are arguing like a logician. I am speaking to you what I feel. Something within me tells me we are in for something big.' I argued no more. I bowed my head in reverence before a faith so robust. I told him I had great regard for English character, I had inestimable friends among them but I saw that his faith in them was greater than mine. Let Englishmen know that a great friend they have lost in Deshabandhu.

The Pir question at Calcutta troubled him a great deal. He was anxious that I should do what I could for its settlement. He said 'I want to placate the Mussalman feeling. I had hoped that after the walling in of the tomb there would be nothing more heard about it. But now that there is a strong agitation about the disinternment I cannot resist it. The law seems clearly against the burial on unauthorised ground. Neither Subash nor Suhrawardy had any authority to grant the permission. But I must carry the Mussalmans with me in all I do. I am trying to induce them to remove the body themselves. I have every hope that they will listen to me.'

We discussed the Tarakeshwar affair and the result was embodied in a statement which was to be signed by him and me if it was necessary. We discussed too Dr. Besant's manifesto. It was the first in point of time to be discussed as he had promised an early reply to her. The result of that discussion was a letter that he despatched to Dr. Besant.

But the thing that most occupied our time was a discussion of the Charkha and Khaddar especially in their bearing on village reorganisation on which he had set his heart and for which he had collected nearly 10 lacs of rupees. I told him that his scheme was much too ambitious to be put into force all at once, that I had studied the skeleton which was shown to me by Pratap Babu and I had strongly disapproved of it as wholly impractical. Deshabandhu had not seen it. He agreed that it was unworkable. In fact, Pratap Babu had himself admitted its unworkability. I told Deshabandhu that he should make the wheel the centre of all other village activities and that the latter should be made to revolve round the wheel and that they could be added wherever the Charkha obtained a footing. I suggested too that this village organisation should be independent of all political turmoil and therefore it should be entrusted to an expert committee with permanent powers whose sole function would be to carry on the village work. I suggested that he should invite Satish Babu to form a committee and take charge of the work on behalf of the Congress. I



have reproduced merely the substance of the argument. Deshabandhu not only agreed with it all but he took down notes and was eager to enforce the scheme at once. He said that he would like to discuss it fully with Satish Babu whilst I was in Darjeeling and then give instructions for passing the necessary resolution by the Congress Committee. Satish Babu was therefore immediately sent for. He came. At first we three had discussions and then I was freed for other work and Deshabandhu had various chats with Satish Babu alone. The latter was to be the first member of the Board. Satcouri Babu was to be the second member and they two were to select a third. They were to have a part of the village fund at once placed at their disposal and I was to give to the Board or Committee a part of the purse that was to be presented to me at Jalpaiguri. This committee in order to place it on a firm footing was even to be registered if necessary under the Benevolent Societies Registration Act which Deshabandhu said he would study for the purpose. Deshabandhu told Pratap Babu of the discussions and decision with instructions to carry out the decision.

Such was his passion for the wheel and therethrough of village organisation. If Lord Birkenhead disappoints us,' he said, 'I do not know what we should do in the Council. But this I know that we must prosecute your programme of the Charkha and organise our villages. We must become an industrious nation once more. We must bring power in the Councils. I must control the young men of Bengal. I must demonstrate, with the aid of the Government if possible and without if necessary, the possibility of achieving Swaraj without violence. Non-violence has become as much my final creed as yours for the deliverance of our country. We can have no Civil Disobedience without non-violence. And without the ability to offer civil resistance there is no Swaraj. We need not have to offer it in fact, but we must have the ability. I must find work for my impatient young men. I agree with you that there is danger of corruption creeping into our camp if we do not take care. I have learnt from my *Guru*, the value of Truth in all our dealings.

I want you to live with him for a few days at least. Your need is not the same as mine.' But he has given me strength I did not possess before. I see things clearly which I saw dimly before.'

But I dare not carry on this part of the conversation any further. I can only tell the reader that it developed into a spiritual discussion or rather discourse for it was all an endless stream on his part of what he was then doing and what he proposed to do when he was stronger. The discourse gave me an insight into his deeply spiritual nature which I did not possess before. I did not know that it was his ruling passion as it is that of so many distinguished Bengalis. When he first talked, now four years ago, of building a hut on the banks of the Ganges and repeated it at Sassoon Hospital when he came to see me, I laughed within myself at the idea and jocosely said that when he built his hut I must share it with him. But I discovered my error at Darjeeling. He was more in earnest about it than about his politics on which he had entered only by force of circumstances.

Nor need the reader consider that I have exhausted all the topics we discussed. I have endeavoured to recall only the principal things. I have omitted his pictures of men both European and Indian.

But if our main conversation always turned round the Charkha our daily routine was no otherwise. The whole household had become a spinning club. Mahadev, Satish Babu and I had become expert teachers. We all had our share of teaching Deshabandhu. He had begun his lessons seriously at Patna. He had asked Rajendra Babu for a teacher. But he was too ill then to make much progress. At Darjeeling he had better hope. His left shoulder was aching but when the ache was gone he would do much better he said. 'But mind, I am very stupid with my hands. Ask my wife how helpless I am.' 'yes,' said Basanti Devi, 'he calls me in even for unlocking his little box.' 'You women are too cunning for men.. You keep your husband helpless even in small matters so as to have your complete

mastery over him,' I said. The whole house seemed to come down with the ringing of Deshabandhu's laughter. He had both the capacity for heartily weeping and laughing. His weeping he did in secret like his wife. During this overwhelming grief Basanti Devi has disdained to weep even before his dearest ones. But Deshabandhu could laugh before crowds of people and cover them with the sunshine of his laughter. Our serious discussion started with laughter which the whole of that big household heard. He knew that I liked sitting crosslegged. He was reclining in his bedstead. I was in a chair. He could not bear the sight of my sitting in the chair with my legs dangling uncomfortably or attempting to cross them in the chair. So he had a pillow put opposite him on his bedstead and a handspun rug arranged on the bedding to make a *gadi*. He seated me on it. 'Do you know, what this reminds me of' I said, as I sat comfortably on it just face to face with him, 'My memory goes back to over forty years ago. It was thus my wife and I sat when we were married. The only thing now lacking is the hand-clasp. I wonder what Basanti Devi has to say to all this.' And the house rang with a laughter alas! no more to be heard.

[The foregoing recollections were written at Bankura on the 8th instant. Lord Birkenhead's speech was published at Calcutta on the 9th and I glanced at it on the same day. I am writing this note on the 10th. I have now carefully read the speech. It gives an added value to the recollections. I know what a shock Lord Birkenhead's speech would have proved to Deshabandhu. Somehow or other he had made up his mind that Lord Birkenhead was going to do something big. In my humble opinion the speech is a severe disappointment not so much for what it does not give as for the utter inactualities for which the Secretary of State for India has made himself responsible. Every fundamental position that he takes up is challenged by almost every educated Indian, no matter to what party he may belong. The pity of it is that probably he believes all he says. Englishmen have an amazing capacity for self-deception.

It no doubt saves them many an uncomfortable situation but it does infinite harm to the world, a large part of which they rule. They delude themselves into the belief that they do so chiefly if not wholly for its benefit. I must endeavour to examine this curious performance if possible next week. Meanwhile we owe a duty to the dead man who is one of the parties responsible for making English politicians think about India more than they did before. How would he have acted if he had been alive? There is no cause for despair. There is less for anger. We had no data for expecting anything from Lord Birkenhead. What he had said in praise of English rule in India is not new. A diligent sub-editor has only to take up his scissors and paste to find out parallel passages in almost identical words from his illustrious predecessors. The speech is a notice to us to set our own house in order. I for one am thankful for it. I have also Deshabandhu's prescription before me. I have shared it with the reader.]

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*16th July, 1935*

## CALCUTTA'S MAYOR

BY M. K. GANDHI

Some friends in Bengal have resented my interference in the matter of the choice of the Mayor of Calcutta. Perhaps common courtesy requires an explanation from me. Whilst after the national loss I decided to stand by Bengal in the hour of her greatest need and, so far as was possible, to wipe her tears and to comfort Basanti Devi as also the fatherless children, I had also decided not to force myself on any of them, but humbly to hold myself at their disposal. It was a simple duty I owed to the memory of a departed friend and comrade. The inauguration of an All-Bengal Deshabandhu Memorial Fund for which I was chiefly responsible, made my stay in Bengal peremptory. Events have justified the wisdom of my decision.

But I had little expected that I should have to give any advice or guidance in the selection of the Mayor of Calcutta in the place of Deshabandhu. It was a task I would gladly have avoided. But, for a soldier, there is often no choice. The matter was referred to me by parties interested in the selection. And I could not shirk the responsibility, as I could not conscientiously plead incapacity. Having been drawn in to the vortex there was no escape from it till the matter was formally decided by the Congress Municipal Party.

Whether the advice I tendered was sound or not, whether it was in the interest of the city or not is undoubtedly a matter which is capable of many opinions. I can only say that I gave the advice that in my opinion was the best for the country and for the City of Palaces. I had before me a tradition and a policy as my measure. My duty lay in doing that which in my opinion Deshabandhu would have done if he was with us in the flesh, in so far as it was in no way in conflict with known and recognised ethical principles. The Congress has for the past four years decided to capture Municipalities and Local Boards in its own interest and for the furtherance of its constructive programme. The idea behind the capture was not better care of sanitation but acquisition of greater political power. There was nothing wrong in this ambition. The Government itself has used these institutions of its creation more for the consolidation of its power and enhancement of its prestige than for better sanitation. I have known London county council elections fought on political issues. And when political fever has run high a Municipal election has been used as an index for gauging the political barometer. And if it has been considered necessary to use Municipalities in England for political purposes, much more is it so in a country where a whole nation lies under the political domination of another. Once grant the advisability of utilising the machinery created by the Government, the capture of Municipal institutions for gaining political power is an inevitable step. Deshabandhu captured the Corporation of Cal-

cutta to that end and he used it most effectively for consolidation of the power of the Congress or, which is almost the same thing in Bengal the Swaraj Party. Did he thereby neglect the interest of the Corporation? I venture to say emphatically 'no.' On the contrary his municipal ambition was as high as the political.

Who was then to be the Mayor in his place? It was a gift within the power of the Party of his creation. It must be bestowed upon him who could best carry out the tradition bequeathed by the great chief and who could gain additional prestige for the party, it being understood that he was also in the party the best person considered from the purely Municipal standpoint. In my opinion Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta was the fittest person answering these requirements. And if he was good enough to lead the Swaraj Party, he deserved all the adventitious support that could be given to him in order to enable him to wear Deshabandhu's mantle with grace and dignity.

But could he do justice to the triple burden? He was already elected President of the Provincial Congress Committee. Could he lead the Swaraj Party, and at the same time carry out the constructive programme of the Congress and discharge the heavy responsibility of the Mayoralty of Calcutta. What was the use of the triple honour if the burden was to break him? My answer was that Mr. Sen Gupta alone was the best Judge of his own capacity. The power should be given him if he needed and wanted it. It should not be thrust upon him. It was undoubtedly a dangerous experiment if Mr. Sen Gupta was a schemer putting his own interest before the country's. In that case it was dangerous even to make him leader of the Swaraj Party. If he was above suspicion he should have the Mayoralty if he needed it for his work and if he could creditably discharge the burden. No Congressman worthy of the name, much less the successor of Deshabandhu could dare seek honour for honour's sake. For me, Mr. Sen Gupta occupied the position of Mac Swiney who wanted to

become the Lord Mayor of Cork not so that he might gain any honour for himself but so that he might face the danger that was then in store for him who occupied the exalted position. The position of the successor of Deshabandhu is, if possible, fraught with greater danger than Mac Swiney had to face. Mac Swiney put his life at stake. Deshabandhu's successor had to put his whole reputation at stake. The slightest deviation from the standard of sacrifice and honour bequeathed by Deshabandhu might blast his successor's reputation for life—a living death worse than the death of the mere body. Thus I reasoned to myself and my friends in pressing Mr. Sen Gupta's claim to the Mayoralty of Calcutta. And I am, thankful to be able to record that both the Congress Party and the Congress Municipal Party understood and appreciated my argument and with but few dissentients accepted the nomination of Mr. Sen Gupta. I only hope that they will make his burden as light as it is possible for them to make. I have no doubt in my mind that Mr. Sen Gupta will try to live up to the high standard set by Deshabandhu.

But let no one regard this as a precedent for all time. On pure principle it is wrong to combine three important functions in one person no matter how able he may be. No man can do full justice to three heavy tasks. The temptation too for self-aggrandisement for any man is too great. It is unfair to expose any one to avoidable temptation. Moreover, even though political parties may capture Municipal bodies it would be wrong to give Municipal responsibilities to active politicians. We must even in our bondage treat Municipal matters on their own merits and create Municipal specialists who would refuse to be guided by political considerations in the discharge of their Municipal duties. If we do not take all these precautions our experiment of capturing Municipal bodies is foredoomed to failure. Municipal life requires a training which a busy politician is not always fitted for. A Municipal councillor, therefore, best serves his political party by divesting himself of the politician whilst he is occupying the Municipal chair, even as a judge

on assuming office ceases to be an advocate or a politician. The reason why inspite of my love of Municipal life and my knowledge of its utmost importance, I have permitted myself to advise the dangerous combination of three functions in one person is because I conceive the present to be an extraordinary occasion requiring a drastic, nay, a dangerous step. Das's are not born every day. Deshabandhu has left a gap which it is impossible for any man to fill. He who has to shoulder the burden left by him needs, therefore, extraordinary props. And on the assumption of average ability and honesty, he should have them. But so far as I am concerned, this experiment, a hope, is the first and the last in my life. I have countenanced it with a full sense of my responsibility and the danger attendant upon it. May God grant the necessary wisdom and the power to Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta. Let the citizens of Calcutta rest assured that the election of an active politician is not intended to be a menace to the healthy growth of the Municipal life of Calcutta. We have precedents for it in the brilliant example of Pheroze Shaw Mehta than whom we never had a better President of a corporation or a better councillor. His tradition was kept up last year by Vithalbhai Patel, who, even his opponents admitted, discharged the burden of his high office with great ability and equally great impartiality. And Vithalbhai Patel is nothing if he is not a fiercely active politician. In stating my position I have really dealt with the highest form of Municipal life. That type has yet to be evolved by us in India. And I am hoping that it would be the privilege of the Congress to do so. It will not be till we have men whose ambition will be more than fully satisfied if they can keep the gutters and closets of their cities scrupulously clean and supply the purest milk at the cheapest rates and rid them of drunkenness and prostitution.



*23rd July, 1925*

## REPLY TO LORD BIRKENHEAD

Gandhiji addressed the following letter to Pandit Motilal Nehru, after having attended the meeting of the Swaraj Council and the Working Committee of the Congress at Calcutta and after an informal discussion with members of the A. I. C. C. present on the occasion :

Calcutta. July, 19.

Dear Panditji,

During these few days I have been taxing myself what special exclusive contribution I can make to the memory of Deshabandhu and the situation created by Lord Birkenhead's speech and I have come to the conclusion that I should absolve the Swaraj Party from all obligations under the pact of last year. The result of this act is that the Congress need no longer be a predominantly spinning association. I recognise that under the situation created by the speech the authority and the influence of the Swaraj Party need to be increased. I would fail in my duty if I neglected a single step within my power to increase the strength of the Party. This can be done if the Congress becomes a predominantly political body. Under the Pact the Congress activity is restricted to the constructive programme mentioned therein. I recognise that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country. Not only do I, therefore, personally absolve you from the restriction but I propose to ask the forthcoming meeting of the A. I. C. C. to do likewise and place the whole machinery of the Congress at your disposal so as to enable you to bring before that body such political resolutions as you may consider necessary in the interest of the country. In fact, I would have you regard me at your disposal in all such matters in which I can conscientiously serve you and the Swaraj Party.

Yours Sincerely,

(Sd). M. K. Gandhi

*23rd July, 1925*

## A DECEPTIVE SPEECH

BY M. K. GANDHI

Lord Birkenhead's pronouncement is deceptive in a double sense. It does not read as harsh on second reading as it did on first, but it disappoints more on the second than it did on the first. The harshness of it is unintended. The Secretary of State could not help himself. He has spoken as he has felt or rather been coached to feel. But his promises are only apparently alluring. A closer perusal leaves one under the impression that the maker of them knows that he will never be called upon to fulfil them. Let us take the most tempting of them. It says in effect 'produce your constitution and we will consider it.' Is it not our thirty five years' experience that we have made petitions that we have considered to be perfect but that they have been rejected 'after careful consideration'? Having had that experience we dropped the beggar's bowl in 1920 and made up our minds to live by our own exertion even though we should perish in the attempt. It is not draughtsmanship that his Lordship really asks, it is swordsmanship; he invites, with the full knowledge that the invitation will not be and could not be accepted. The evidence is in the speech itself. He had before him the Minority report of the Muddiman Committee, *i. e.* of Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jinnah, two among the cleverest lawyers we have in India and who have never been guilty of the crime of non-cooperation, and one of whom has been Law Member of the Viceregal Council. They and their colleague have been told that they did not know their business. Has then a constitution framed by Pandit Motilal Nehru and endorsed by, say, the Right Honourable Shrinivasa Shastri and Mian Fazli Hussain a better chance of favourable reception? Is not Lord Birkenhead's offer a trap for the unwary to fall in? Supposing an honest constitution is drawn up just to meet the present situation, will it not be immediately regarded as preposterous and something infini-

tely less offered in its stead? When I was hardly twenty five years old I was taught to believe that if we wished to be satisfied with 4 annas we must ask for 16 annas in order to get the 4 annas. I never learnt that lesson because I believed in asking for just what I needed and fighting for it. But I have not failed to observe that there was a great deal of truth in the very practical advice.

The silliest constitution backed by force, whether violent or non-violent, will receive the promptest consideration especially from the British who know only too well the value of at least one kind of force.

There is the Bill taken to England by that tireless servant of India, Dr. Besant. It is signed by many eminent Indians. And if some others have not signed it, it is not because they will not be satisfied with it but because they know that nothing but the waste paper basket is its destiny. It has not been signed because those who have refrained do not wish to be party to the insult of the nation which its summary rejection will imply. Let Lord Birkenhead say that he will accept any reasonable constitution that may be prepared by a party or parties overwhelmingly representative of Indian public opinion and he will have a constitution in a week's time. Let him publicly assure Dr. Besant that her Bill will have every chance of acceptance if it is endorsed by Pandit Motilal Nehru and others whom he may name and I shall undertake to secure those signatures. The fact is that there is no sincere ring about the offer.

It is no fault of the Secretary of State for India that his offer does not read sincere. We are not ready as yet to demand anything. Therefore, naturally it is for the British Government to give and for us to reject, if what is offered is not deemed enough for the time being. For us what the new Commander-in-Chief considers as unattainable is the only thing worth living for, fighting for and dying for. One's birthright is never unattainable and Lokamanya taught us that Swaraj was our birthright. The definition of that Swaraj is to rule ourselves although we misrule ourselves for the time being. We, the

English and the Indians, are in a hopeless muddle. Lord Birkenhead thinks the British Government are trustees for our welfare. We think that they hold us in bondage for their own benefit. Trustees never charge as their commission seventy five per cent of the income of their wards. His Lordship says we cannot be a nation with our 9 religions and 130 languages. We contend that for all practical purposes and for protection from outside the Indian border we are one nation. He thinks that non-co-operation was a dreadful mistake. The vast majority of us think that it alone awakened this sleeping nation from its torpor, it alone has given the nation a force whose strength is beyond measure. The Swaraj Party is a direct result of that force. He says that in Hindu-Mussalman dissensions the British Government have 'kept their hands unsullied.' It is the certain belief of almost every Indian that they, the British Government, are principally responsible for most of our quarrels. He thinks that we must co-operate with them. We say that when they mean well or when there is change of heart, they will co-operate with us. He says that no gifted leader arose to make use of the Reforms. We say that Messrs. Shastri and Chintamani, not to mention others, were gifted enough to make the Reforms a success but in spite of all the goodwill in the world they found that they could not do so. Deshabandhu showed a way out. His offer stands.

But what hope is there of his offer being responded to in the spirit in which it has been made? There are the different viewpoints which make us English and Indians see things contrary-wise. Is there any chance, then, of finding a common meeting ground?

Yes, there is.

We, the two peoples, occupy an unnatural position, *i.e.* of rulers and ruled. We Indians must cease to think that we are the ruled. That we can only do when we have some kind of force. We seemed to think we had it in 1921 and so we fancied that Swaraj was coming inside of a year. Now no one dare prophesy. Let us gather that force—the non-violent force of

civil resistance and we shall be equal. This is no threat, no menace. It is a hard fact. And if I do not now-a-days regularly criticise the acts of our 'rulers' as I used to before, it is not because, the fire of the civil resister has died down in me but because I am an economist of speech pen and thought. When I am ready I shall speak freely. I have ventured to criticise Lord Birkenhead's pronouncement to tell the bereaved people of Bengal in particular and of India in general that I feel the unintended prick of Lord Birkenhead's speech just as much as they do, and that whilst Motilalji will be fighting in the Assembly and leading the Swaraj Party in the place of Deshabandhu, I shall be leaving no stones unturned to prepare the atmosphere needed for civil resistance—a vocation for which I seem to me to be more fitted than for any other. Has not the singer of the Gita said, 'Better by far is the performance of one's own *Dharma* (duty), however humble it may be, than another's, however loftier it may be.'

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*23rd July, 1925*

## THE SPINNING FRANCHISE

BY M. K. GANDHI

There was an informal meeting of the Swarajists and others on the 17th instant. It was a representative gathering. All including myself felt that a revision of the franchise was necessary and all felt that the self-spinning as an alternative should be permanently retained and not merely by way of trial in the Congress franchise. That means permanent recognition of the right of labour to be directly represented in the Congress. All agreed that yarn as distinguished from spinning franchise must be abolished. It had given rise to hypocrisy and even dishonesty. The question of quantity of self-spun yarn or cash subscription was held in abeyance. There was a divergence of opinion. An overwhelming majority favoured also the retention of Khad-

dar-wearing as a permanent part of the franchise. This is in my opinion a decided gain. The third proposition unanimously agreed to was that an All-India Spinners' Association should be formed to be an integral part of the Congress, with absolute powers, which would control the spinning part of the Congress activity and act as the Congress Agency for receiving and testing spinning subscriptions. The result, if the recommendations are accepted, would be that the Swarjists will 'run' the Congress and the A. I. S. A. will take the place analogous to the Swaraj Party.

The A. I. C. C. will meet on the 1st of October to consider the proposal. It will meet without any restriction on the freedom of the members. Not even those who were present at the informal meeting will be bound by the vote they gave at it. If on further consideration they think differently, they will be free to vote against the proposals that will be submitted to the meeting. The members of the A. I. C. C. will be free also to move amendments and criticise as they please. Each one will vote as a Congressman or better still as an Indian without any party obligation. As the reader will observe from my letter to Panditji I have as a matter of duty absolved the Swaraj Party from any obligation under last year's pact. The propositions to be submitted to the A. I. C. C. must be examined on merits. I do not desire that any member, Swarajist or No-changer, should vote to placate me. We are trying to evolve a democratic constitution. It is one's conscience alone which needs placating and no person, however great he may be. For me there are no No-changers and Pro-changers. Those who advocate Council entry and those who do not, equally serve the nation if their action or inaction is prompted by love of the country. Indeed, I urge those who have no absolute scruples against Council entry immediately to join the Swaraj Party and strengthen its hands.

I hope that every member of the A. I. C. A. will attend the forthcoming meeting, take part in the proceedings and register his opinion. Personally, I do not want the matter to

be decided by a majority of votes. Whatever is done must be done by almost absolute unanimity.

What is proposed is a vital change in the constitution. Ordinarily the A. I. C. C. should not interfere with it. But there are moments when it will be disloyal not to do so. If the overwhelming opinion in the country requires a change that admits of no delay, it is the most proper thing for the A. I. C. C. to make the change and take the consequence of having its decision revoked and its action censured by the Congress. An agent has always the right to anticipate the unexpressed wishes of his principal when he acts in the latter's interest and at his own peril. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that if an overwhelming majority of the members of the A. I. C. C. desire the change above foreshadowed, it would be wrong on their part by hesitation to waste precious three months of the nation. The Cawnpore Congress should be relieved of the necessity of a prolonged discussion over a matter which could well be decided by the A. I. C. C. Its time should be left free for tackling larger problems.

Let it be also noted that the congress will, under the scheme sketched by me, become a predominantly political body, taking the adjective in its generally accepted sense. Swarajists will become, as they ought to be, the Congress instead of being its chief and only political agents. That is the least answer that the A. I. C. C. can make to Lord Birkenhead.

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*30th July, 1925*

## CONGRESS & POLITICAL PARTIES

BY M. K. GANDHI

I gladly publish the following from Sjt. Satyananda Bose, a veteran Congressman whom I had the pleasure of knowing even while I was in South Africa because of his help to my late lamented comrade Sorabji of Adagan (Surat).

"Some misapprehension has arisen in the minds of the public in regard to your proposal to hand over the Congress to the Swaraj Party.

"It is said that the Congress will henceforth be the tail of the Swaraj Party organisation and it will cease to occupy the dominant position in the public life of the country. The provision in your last year's pact with the Swaraj Party, viz., that the latter will carry on the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures on behalf of the Congress strengthens this suspicion.

"No doubt you have dissolved the pact. But it is suspected that there will be another pact giving to the Swaraj Party the power of direction and control over the congress in *express words*.

"Personally I cannot believe that either you or Pandit Motilal Nehru contemplate this course.

"It goes without saying that as the Swaraj Party is in the majority in the Congress and outside it, they partly will control the Congress for the present. But this position is different from a pact which gives the party a predominant position irrespective of every other fact and consideration.

"The Congress ought to be like the British Parliament. In the latter there are members belonging to different political parties and those who are in the majority for the time being guide and control its affairs. This condition is the result of the elections and is *not* due to any agreement arrived at from outside. In the Indian National Congress too this constitutional state of things should prevail.

"I request you to make your position clear. There is a growing desire amongst the non-Swarajists to join the Congress. I hope nothing will be done to put any obstacle in the way.

"The Congress should remain as it has been in the past the predominant national body, whatever party may control its affairs for the time being."



"Written pacts are artificial, unconstitutional and unnecessary and they only serve to create difference and dissension. Pacts no doubt may be reversed. But why should there be a pact at all?"

I do not think that there is anything in my letter to Pandit Motilalji to warrant the misapprehension referred to by Satyanand Babu. All that my letter is intended to convey is that the embargo, for which I made myself responsible, on pure political activities in the Congress at Belgaum should be removed.

Personally, I retain the same opinion that I did last year that if educated Indians concentrated on the triple constructive programme and made it their predominant occupation we should be nearer Swaraj. But I confess that I have failed to carry that conviction home. I must, therefore, no longer stand in the way of the Congress being developed and guided by educated Indians rather than by one like myself who has thrown in his lot entirely with the masses, and who has fundamental differences with the mind of educated India as a body. I still want to act upon them, but not by leading the Congress, on the contrary, by working my way to their hearts silently so far as possible, even as I did between 1915 and 1919. I recognise the great services rendered to the country by educated India in the face of tremendous odds. It has got its own method of work; it has its own place in the national life. I cannot be blind to the fact that, no matter what may be said to the contrary, the disciplined resistance of the Swaraj party has made its impression upon the rulers. The best way in which I can help that activity is by removing myself out of the way and by concentrating myself solely upon constructive work with the help of the Congress and in its name and that too only so far as educated Indians will permit me to do so.

I recognise that it is educated India which is to set the pace in the Congress, not I and those who have ceased to think politically for the time being. In my opinion both have a place in the national evolution. And each group remaining in its own sphere can complement and help the activity of the other.

I pin my faith to the spinning wheel and *Khaddar*. It is a programme which can absorb the energies of the most advanced youths of the country. It is an effort which demands the exclusive attention, not of one man, but of hundreds, indeed thousands, of men and women. I do not want to engage in disputations about the necessity or the utility of the spinning wheel and *Khaddar*. Time has come for working out the propositions I have advanced in behalf of *Khaddar*, and in working them out I want the good-will and co-operation of all who will extend them to the movement, and this is possible only by removing the spinning wheel from the arena of Congress politics. The spinning wheel and *Khaddar* will, therefore, retain that place in the Congress which may be freely given to them by the politically-minded countrymen. If my advice is, therefore, accepted by the All-India Congress Committee, the ban upon political propaganda through the Congress will be entirely removed, and the Swaraj Party will, therefore, then function not through its separate organisation, but through the Congress itself, not by virtue of any new pact but by reason of the dissolution of the pact existing between the party and myself, and consequent amendment of the Congress constitution and of the Congress resolution that gave effect to the pact. The pact threw the door open to the other political parties by suspending non-co-operation. Its dissolution will make the opening wider still in as much as the politically-minded people of the country will no longer labour under the handicap of the Congress being confined merely to the constructive programme. They had some hesitation in joining the Swaraj Party and in their opinion the Congress did not afford sufficient scope for their energies and talents. But when the ban is removed they can, if they will, whole-heartedly join the Congress and move any political resolutions that they may desire from the Congress platform, and cross swords with the Swarajists and so act upon them and the country.

The compulsory yarn franchise will no longer hamper them. The only impediment in their way will be the compul-

sory adoption of Khaddar as national wear. But it may be that the All-India Congress Committee will reject even Khaddar as part of the franchise. I shall not stand in the way even of such rejection, painful though it will certainly be to me; for in my opinion then educated India will cut off the only visible and tangible tie that today binds it to the masses. I shall hope, therefore, that Khaddar will find a permanent place in the Congress franchise. Do we not want to encourage cottage industries and handicrafts? Do we not want millions of women who have no work to do, and who will gladly earn a few pices per day, to do so by spinning? Handspinning, I understand, is to be retained as a permanent part of the franchise as an alternative. To that I should think there can be no objection. If, therefore, the proposals that I have made are accepted by the All-India Congress Committee, it will become possible for every educated Indian to join the Congress and evolve a united national political programme that will meet the emergency that has arisen both by Deshabandhu's death and Lord Birkenhead's speech.

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*30th July, 1925*

## THE CONGRESS UNEMPLOYED

BY M. K. GANDHI

Whilst I was discussing with friends the object of the All-India Deshabandhu Memorial, certain friends asked, "Why should not the maintenance of dependents of those who are in prison or deported and alleviation of unemployment of Congressmen who are starving by reason of their non-co-operation be one of the objects if not the object?" The same question has come before me during my stay in Bengal in a variety of ways. In my opinion it is not possible to raise the fund suggested from all over India and from all parties for such a purpose. So far as the maintenance of the dependents of political prisoners and detenues is concerned, it is a matter that requires most

delicate handling and must be left to each province to settle in the manner that may be considered most suitable in the province. I cannot reconcile myself to a permanent fund for that object. My own practical experience in South Africa, and to a limited extent here, has shown me that very often undeserving people get relief, and the deserving are left out. A permanent fund for distant contingencies of this nature offers temptation to those who do not mind living on charity. In order to obviate chances of dishonest practices I had to establish a settlement in South Africa where all those who needed and deserved relief could be accommodated, fed, and looked after. At a single stroke it was possible by this arrangement to save thousands of rupees, to provide for every honest case of distress, to do absolute justice to every one, to put people in distress in ideal surroundings, to find useful employment for them and to provide education for the children of such families. I suggested a similar course in Chittagong after the great strike in 1921. There is danger of charity being misplaced unless drastic measures as I have suggested be adopted to deal with cases of political imprisonment or detention. The real fight, if it is to come at all on a large scale, is still to come. We shall have to pay a price adequate to the freedom we want and unless we think out and devise some plan of meeting such contingencies in a reasonable manner, in the struggle for freedom, it is possible for us to be starved into an ignominious surrender. Apart, therefore, from the question of Memorial and on the merits of the case I am against any permanent fund for the relief of what may be called political distress.

The question of the Congress unemployed is more urgent and of a permanent character. Although we have resolutions on the subject, hitherto we have been unable to establish an All-India Congress Service or even a Provincial Congress Service, not for want of will but for want of ability. Personally I have endeavoured to tackle it more than once but I own I have been baffled. It has not been possible to fix a maximum

to be paid nor has it been possible to devise grades of service. Wherever, therefore, it has been sought to establish a system it has been found necessary to leave well alone and try every case on its merits. It is perhaps not possible as yet to establish a regular service, but I have no doubt that the scale and the system are gradually growing.

There are two branches of constructive activity which absorb the largest number of Congress workers,—Khaddar and to lesser extent Education. But here again every province will have to be responsible for its own schedule and as it too depends, as a rule, upon local contributions it is a fairly sound proposition that that Service only deserves to live which obtains local support, because the test of appreciation of service is the support given by those who are served. The very existence of the Congress depends upon the fact that it supplies a local want. It is not like a Government super-imposed and therefore independent of the support of those whom it seeks to rule. Both the Khaddar and the educational services pre-suppose continued activity and continued preparation. I have laid it down as a rule for my own guidance that if neither of these activities has local support, it is due to want of fact or ability on the part of those who are engaged in the respective services. I do not know a single case of starvation of deserving men. I know cases of straitened circumstances of Congress workers eking out an honest but precarious life. But I fear that that will be progressively our lot, and if in some cases some of us have not yet reconciled ourselves to the simplicity and severity that have entered into the national life, and if some owing to a long course of habit are even constitutionally unfitted to adopt themselves to the severe simplicity which is expected of them, in any case I hope it is now clear why the All-India Deshabandhu Memorial may not take the form of giving relief to the distressed or finding employment for Congress workers. The present object of the Memorial is calculated indirectly to do both.

## CONGRESS CORRUPTION

I receive letters every week complaining that corruption and indiscipline have crept into the Congress ranks, that people have got into the Congress who seek to exploit it for their own private ends. Here is the latest typical letter duly signed:

“—President, Congress Committee—enlisted about 1,300 members for the Congress but the subscriptions are not forthcoming from him, nor has he submitted any accounts.

“With characteristic lack of scruples the Secretary and—are not convening the long overdue annual meeting lest they might be turned out of office. In contravention of rules—has been making payment without sanction. —is a notorious character who collected money which he never accounted for to the authorities.”

There are also several other charges mentioned in the foregoing indictment. The complaint too has been received that the Congress Committees in several parts of India have been using monies received by them for purposes other than those for which they were earmarked. I hope that responsible Congressmen will look into their respective organisations and wherever any corruption or misappropriation is discovered they will not hesitate to denounce such corruption and remove it.

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*6th August, 1925*

## DO I HATE ENGLISHMEN?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Some esteemed English friends have taken exception to the italicised sentence in the following extract from my article “The Science of Surrender” in *Young India*, dated the 9th July, 1925.

“I make bold to say that without mutual surrender there is no hope for this distraught country. Let us not be hyper-sensitive or devoid of imagination. To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover

gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wishes to give, because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left. *It is libelous to say that Hindus act like Englishmen; Hindus cannot even if they would,* and this I say inspite of the brutality of the labourers of Kidderpore. Both Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. Both are fallen. And they are in the position of lovers have to be, whether they will or no."

The friends think that in writing that sentence, I have done a grave injustice to Englishmen, for they say that the implied censure applies to *all* Englishmen. I feel sorry that there could be any such interpretation possible regarding the passage. I had never intended it. I assure the friends that such was not my meaning. The context makes it clear that my remarks are not applicable to Englishmen as a whole. They could not, for instance, apply to C. F. Andrews who has utterly effaced himself for the sake of India.

The Mussalman charge was that the Hindus were trying to suppress and enslave them even as Englishmen had done with both Hindus and Mussalmans—meaning, necessarily, the majority of Hindus and Englishmen. In the extract quoted my endeavour was to show that Hindus had not the power even if they had the desire to suppress Mussalmans. The friends do not object to my statement if it applies to Englishmen as a class in India,—not that they endorse my opinion even to that extent, but they could not be shocked as they had known me to hold that opinion for many years. But they were shocked because they thought that I had included in the condemnation all Englishmen including the three friends who were honestly trying to serve India to the best of their ability. They thought that the passage was written in hatred and anger. As a matter of fact, there was neither hatred nor anger at the time I wrote the passage, and if the passage bears the meaning which I still hold it does not, I can only plead my ignorance of the English language which is not my mother-tongue and whose intricacies, I own, I have not mastered. I hold myself to be

incapable of hating any being on earth. By a long course of prayerful discipline I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody. I know that this is a big claim. Nevertheless, I make it in all humility. But I can and I do hate evil wherever it exists. I hate the system of Government that the British people have set up in India. I hate the domineering manner of Englishmen as a class in India. I hate the ruthless exploitation of India even as I hate from the bottom of my heart the hideous system of untouchability for which millions of Hindus have made themselves responsible. But I do not hate the domineering Englishmen as I refuse to hate the domineering Hindus. I seek to reform them in all the loving ways that are open to me. My Non-co-operation has its root not in hatred, but in love. My personal religion peremptorily forbids me to hate anybody. I learnt this simple yet grand doctrine when I was twelve years old through a school book and the conviction has persisted up to now. It is daily growing on me. I beg therefore to assure every Englishman, who like these friends might have misunderstood me, that I shall never be guilty of hating Englishmen even though I might have to fight them fiercely, even as I did in 1921. It will be a non-violent fight, it will be clean, it will be truthful.

Mine is not an exclusive love. I cannot love Mussalmans or Hindus and hate Englishmen. For if I merely love Hindus and Mussalmans because their ways are on the whole pleasing to me, I shall soon begin to hate them when their ways displease me as they may well do any moment. A love that is based on the goodness of those whom you love is a mercenary affair, whereas, true love is self-effacing and demands no consideration. It is like that of a model Hindu wife, Sita, for instance, who loved her Rama even whilst he bid her pass through a raging fire. It was well with Sita, for she knew what she was doing. She sacrificed herself out of her strength, not out of her weakness. Love is the strongest force the world possesses and yet it is the humblest imaginable.



*20th August, 1925*

## WHY NOT SURRENDER COMPLETELY ?

By M. K. GANDHI

The following is a typical letter. It is signed by several "No-changers."

"Your promise to place the whole Congress machinery at the disposal of the Swarajists, in order to make it predominantly a political body must have shocked almost all the "No-changers." Sir, what is the political programme in the first place? Was not Non-co-operation programme a political one which you suspended last year? Why should you not renew it, in different form if wanted, to meet the present situation, created by the speech of Lord Birkenhead? You made a pact with the Swarajists last year. Did they faithfully work it out as promised at Belgaum? What obstructed them? You know that most of the "No-changers" did not like the pact but accepted it against their wishes for you. Now again you have thrown them overboard by your promise to the Swarajists without their previous consultation. Once accepted by you, it will have to be accepted by the No-changers though against their wishes. They are being dragged as it were.

"Is the Council programme the only political programme? Will Councils give strength to the country for civil disobedience or non-payment of taxes? Under your leadership the Congress had become a working body and now you again want to turn it into a place for vocal protests for arm-chair politicians. Congress Committees are today at least Spinning Associations, Khaddar Depots or Khaddar shops, but hereafter they will be nothing more than debating clubs.

"You propose alternate franchise, money or self-spun yarn, but the Maharashtra party do not approve of it nor do they approve of Khaddar-wearing. They are going to raise an opposition against, and are sure, though not this year,

next year they will do away with that. They don't want your spinning association. Why not start it outside Congress and surrender completely to the Swarajists ?”

The writers forget that I do not claim to lead or have any party; if only for the reason that I seem to be constantly changing and shifting my ground. To me I seem to be constantly growing. I must respond to varying conditions, and yet remain changeless within. I have no desire to drag anybody. My appeal is continuously to the head and heart combined. At the forthcoming meeting I expect an open and unfettered discussion wherein my opinion should be counted as only one among the many that would be then expressed. I know that this would appear to many to be utterly non-sensical. But if I persist long enough in expressing my opinion freely, those who feel that they are being dragged will soon resist me. But, after all, what have I done save that I have truly gauged the mind of educated India ? I do not wish violently to wrest the Congress from educated India. The latter must grow to the new thought, if such it is. It is not for those who have ceased to believe in the particular method of Non-co-operation adopted in 1920 to give it a re-trial or to find out a third thing. It is for those like me, who still believe in that form of Non-co-operation, to demonstrate its present utility, so that the sceptics might reer round. But I must confess that I can present nothing in the shape of a fire-works display to those who came to Non-co-operation, not with an inward conviction, but for the alluring promise it made of immediate deliverance. That deliverance in the way it was expected not having come, who shall blame them if they fall back upon the original programme, with such changes as it is capable of admitting ? After all, those who have led an active political life in the old, fashion, cannot possibly be expected to sit idle, whilst “ dreamers ” like me expect to evolve an intensely active programme out of a “ harmless toy ” like the spinning wheel. They brought the Congress into being, and I must wait for their conversion before the Congress can become a purely spinning association.

I do not know what the Maharashtra Party will or will not do. It is undoubtedly open to it or anybody else to oppose spinning as an alternative franchise or the wearing of Khaddar as part of the franchise. It is equally open to the others to insist on spinning and Khaddar being retained. If we do not finally arrive at a practically unanimous agreement no change is possible before the Congress session at Cawnpore. We may cavil if we like, at people's opinions. That would be a sign of intolerance. Each one should have faith in his own programme and must be prepared to work it even single-handed if necessary.

Experience teaches me that there is room for both the programmes in the country,—for spinning and Council-entry. I must, therefore, whilst I retain my own views about Council entry in the abstract, support those Council goers who are likely to serve my ideals better, who have greater powers of resistance and greater faith in the wheel and Khaddar. These are the Swarajists in general.

A Spinning Association does become a necessity under the new scheme. But it must be under the Congress patronage so long as the Congress continues to extend it. I have too great a regard for the Congress to want to do without it. It is the one institution that has weathered many a breeze fair or foul. It is the fruit of years of patient labour given to it by educated India. I shall wilfully do nothing to decrease its usefulness.

Lastly let no one think anything to be a foregone conclusion at the forthcoming meeting of the A. I. C. C. It is the duty of every member to attend it and come to it with an open mind determined to exercise his or her independent judgment fearlessly and in the best interest of the country.

*27th August, 1925*

SWARAJ OR DEATH

By M. K. GANDHI

The following is printed not for its intrinsic worth but for the earnestness of the writer whom I know, and for the reason that many people hold similar views :

In your "Young India" of the 25th June I find things which I utterly fail to understand. On page 219 under the heading "On the verge of it\*" you have, I think, asked your correspondent to explain—'Why do you think that we cannot spin and wear Khaddar or remove untouchability or be friends with the Mussalmans till we get Swaraj? How will the withdrawal of Englishmen help Hindus to trust the Mussalmans or vice versa, or open the eyes of blind orthodoxy and better the lot of the oppressed people or induce the idle to work the spinning wheel and those whose tastes are degraded to revise them and revert to Khaddar? Surely if we cannot do these things now under the pressure of adversity, we are not likely to do them when we are lulled into a sense of false security by nominal Swaraj. What is there to prevent us now from attempting or accomplishing all or any of these three things if it is not our own unwillingness, lethargy or worse?'

I cannot say what the correspondent will answer to these your queries but I respectfully like to point out to you that your assertion—that without Khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability there can be no Swaraj—also appears to be based on wrong premises. There appears to be some truth also in the alternative assertion of your correspondent, and in his support I say this :

(1) The spinning and use of Khaddar will be wholly popularised only after the establishment of Swaraj and not before. The reasons are as follows :

\* Omitted in this collection.

The Government is a part and parcel of every society. Everybody seeks its help every moment. For the time being life, honour and property of all individuals under the Government are entrusted to it. Some have to win cases, some to get titles and honours, some are to be provided with appointment and so on. Everybody can do without the Government help only for a fixed period of time and that only a small one but nobody can do without it (the Government) for a longer period. Everywhere in the country, specially in my district, the use of Khaddar is a symbol of anti-Government sentiment. It is regarded as the dress of the rebel. It may not have been enacted in any code of law but in practice it is so. You must be knowing that in this country law is one thing and its administration is another. Everybody is afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Government side. How can it, viz. the use of Khaddar with its antecedents be popular? The heroes and the soldiers alone will take it up but not the mass. Thus the use of Khaddar will not be popular before Swaraj. In fact the use of Khaddar is a crime now. You may ask how will the people fight and overthrow this Government when they are so coward as not to use even Khaddar? Mahatmaji, any great event takes place in the world only through divine agencies and the reasons are inexplicable to men. Overthrow of such a mighty Government will be effected really through divine agencies and outwardly through a great national excitement amounting to a temporary madness on the part of all or at least the majority of the Indian people. And everybody will afford during the great national excitement to be so mad, fearless and brave for some time for this purpose.

After Swaraj it will be popular, for there will be no necessity of fear from the use of Khaddar. Besides, the people will be encouraged to use it and they will also try to seek the favour of the nationalists forming the Government as we find in District Boards and Municipalities these days

under nationalists. Above all, there will be a legislation declaring the use of foreign cloth as a crime, as every nation has done and is doing to encourage home industries.

(2) There can be no permanent Hindu-Muslim unity before Swaraj. The reasons are as follows:

During my boyhood one of my paternal uncles told me a story which runs thus—‘Once there were two young men who were fast friends. They appeared to have had two bodies but one soul. Their parents did not like it and were on the look-out to effect enmity between these friends. They proclaimed probably by a beat of drum a handsome reward to any one successfully effecting a breach between the friends. One old woman popularly known as “Kutni” undertook the task. She went to the friends and called only one of them apart from the other but within his (other friends’s) sight. She took her mouth to the ears of the friend whom she had called apart, pretended to say something to him, said nothing and went away. The man returned to his friend who was left behind and was asked to state what the woman had told him. The poor man stated that she had said nothing. Suspicion naturally arose in the mind of the other man who saw so many performances with his own eyes and was in the dark as to their purposes and result, and it developed. In course of time their friendship came to an end and the woman got the reward.’

Exactly in the same way, Mahatmaji, please do not expect perfect unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans so long as the third party, with not only all the available resources of the country but also with those of the whole British Empire and with a clear knowledge that its very existence depends only on the disunion and quarrel among the several races inhabiting this country, is always persistently trying every moment to keep the people fighting among themselves. You are too anxious for Hindu-Muslim unity as a road to Swaraj but if you please think of it over

and over again, I am sure you will arrive at a conclusion that the overthrow of this Government and establishment of Swaraj in this country are the road of the peace and unity among the several communities of the country and not the vice versa. Permanent unity is impossible before Swaraj.

Untouchability even cannot be removed before Swaraj is established in this country. The reasons are as follows :

Anything and everything done for the good of the country is opposed by the present Government and at its insinuation by its native allies. The removal of untouchability is for the good of the country and hence it has been and will be thwarted by the Government. You are a reformer. Your followers in Travancore were so much harrassed by the Government there at Vaikam. If you want that the untouchables be given certain rights and privileges in a certain Hindu temple, there will be a protest from the orthodox section of the Hindu community but is it not a fact that this Government comes and will come to help them against the untouchables ? How can you succeed in this matter unless and until you remove this Government ? At present, Mahatmaji, for any thing evil in this country this Government is alone responsible. You are supported in this your programme by the majority of the Indian people but it is not fulfilled only owing to the existence of this Government.

There is much truth in what you say in regard to your triple programme but I most respectfully suggest that the practical side of the human affairs is certainly overlooked by you in a certain degree. The country and we, your soldiers, are faithfully carrying out your orders to the extent we can. But it is my prayer that kindly think of Swaraj first and of any other thing afterwards. Swaraj alone will solve all national troubles. You have already declared that if the people fail to complete the Khaddar programme by the end of this year, you will give the

country a programme by following which there will be either Swaraj or death to all patriots. I think you remember it. Please make haste or every thing will get dull. The time has almost arrived when you should publish your programme and call upon the nation either to win Swaraj or to die."

There is some truth in the correspondent's reasoning. But he is wholly wrong in imputing all evil to the Government. After all, is there not a great deal of truth in the saying that a people get the Government they deserve? If we had not been a people easily duped and as easily subdued, we would not have succumbed to the blandishments or the force of the East India Company and given up handspinning or Khaddar. If the Hindus and Mussalmans had been living like brothers, the British satraps could not have divided us. And it is libellous to blame the Government for the existence of untouchability. Probably if the Government had no fear of a revolt of orthodoxy they would have made short work of untouchability long ago. I do not know a single case in which the Government have obstructed that reform. The correspondent is wrong in imputing blame to the British Government for the Vaikam business. It is solely due to the timidity of the indigenous Government. I am no lover of the existing system of Government. But I shall fail to destroy it, if in my rage I lose the faculty for discrimination. "Give the devil his due" is a sound proverb worth bearing in mind.

But I fully suspect that when Khaddar becomes powerful enough to oust foreign cloth, the Government will probably endeavour to kill it. I refuse to believe that it is or need be a rebel's dress. What is true is that there is a subtle propaganda against Khaddar in Government circles. I am told that the wearing of Khaddar places the wearer under observation. He cannot get the facilities he would otherwise get in Government circles. But there is nothing to prevent the general body of people from adopting Khaddar. Surely Swaraj will not drop from the clouds. It will be the fruit of patience, perseverance,



ceaseless toil, courage and an intelligent appreciation of the environment. Even the 'divine agency' of which the correspondent writes will be available to prayerful toil, not laziness of mind or body. Prayer without labour is like faith without works—a Dead Sea apple. Whilst, therefore, we may not have complete exclusion of foreign cloth, we might at least make a 'decent show' of Khaddar before Swaraj is won. What is, there, for instance, to prevent Congressmen from wearing Khaddar on all occasions or from spinning? Or are they to be expected to wear Khaddar and spin after Swaraj is established? Are we angels merely waiting for the establishment of national Government to flap our wings? We may not have an ideal communal unity before Swaraj. But what is there to prevent a workable unity? Is it not rather a fact that we distrust one another too much really to desire Swaraj?

The correspondent's mistake lies in his misconception of the function of Government. He evidently thinks that an ideal Government is that which orders everything for us so that we need not even think for ourselves. Whereas, in truth a Government that is ideal governs the least. It is no self-government that leaves nothing for the people to do. That is pupillage—our present state. My correspondent is evidently unable as yet to rise superior to that state. But if we are to attain Swaraj, a large number of us must outgrow enforced nonage and feel our adolescence. We must govern ourselves at least where there is no deadly opposition from armed authority. The triple programme is the test of our capacity for self-government. If we impute all our weaknesses to the present Government, we shall never shed them.

The correspondent reminds me of a statement made by me at Belgaum that probably at the end of the year if there is not much headway made, I would find a way whereby we could make our final choice and say 'Death or Swaraj.' He has evidently in mind some strange upheaval in which all distinction between violence and non-violence will be abolished. Such confusion will most assuredly lead to self-indulgence is not self-rule.

Self-indulgence is anarchy, and though anarchy is every time better than slavery or suppression of self it is a state which I would not only have no hand in consciously bringing into being but which I am by nature unfitted to bring about. Any method of 'Death or Swaraj' that I may suggest will always avoid confusion and anarchy. My Swaraj will be therefore not a result of murder of others but a voluntary act of continuous self-sacrifice. My Swaraj will not be a bloody usurpation of rights but the acquisition of power, will be a beautiful and natural fruit of duty well and truly performed. It will, therefore, provide amplest excitement of the Chaitanya type not of the Nero type. I have no formula at the present moment but with my correspondent I share the belief that it will be a divine guidance I am awaiting the sign. It can come, often does come when the horizon is the blackest. But I know that it will be preceded by the rise of a class of young men and women who will find full excitement in work, work and nothing but work for the nation.

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*17th September, 1925*

## A STRING OF QUESTIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

One of the best of national workers sends me questions for answers. Here they are with answers :

Q. "You say we must help the Swaraj Party. What is the meaning of this help?"

A. My meaning is that every one should help this party to the best of his ability and as far as his conscience will permit. Thus one who is inclined towards the council programme and has no conscientious objections to it will join the party. One who has conscientious objections will refrain, but short of joining give all the other help that he can. He may object to vote also. He will then refrain even from voting. In no case will he vilify the party.

Q. "Should young workers in the villages take part in the election turmoil and canvass for votes for the Swarajists?"

A. I have not conceived that as possible except for pro-changers. Those village workers who are, for instance, doing Khaddar work, and who are not politically inclined will certainly not disturb themselves and their work to the extent contemplated in the question.

Q. "The Swarajists will want to capture village boards, municipalities, local boards etc. What are Khadi workers to do?"

A. I expect Swarajists also to be Khadi workers. The difference between them and No-changers is that Swarajists add council work to Khadi work. They, therefore, whilst remaining lovers of Khadi give the first place to Council work. No-changers have nothing but Khadi and other constructive work to fall back upon. Each may go his own way and each is expected to help the other to the best of his ability and conscience.

Q. "What is my position when there are Brahmin and Non-Brahmin candidates,—one set opposing the other?"

A. In such a case if I were you I would refrain from interfering except to remove strife and bitterness.

Q. "You have said not only should No-changers refrain from opposition with the Swarajists but they should even help them. What is the extent of this help?"

A. I have already answered this question. When there is friendliness, there are many ways of giving help without hindering one's own special work. But each one must determine for himself the extent of help that he is to render. Such help has to be a voluntary offering which cannot be dictated, much less can there be any coercion. There is no question here of party discipline. Mine is the opinion of an individual. The meaning of it can be more fully derived from my own conduct.

Q. "Have you decided to help the Swarajists as a matter of necessity, or because you consider that through Councils India will benefit?"

A. There is room for a third reason. I do not consider that Councils will benefit India in the present condition. Nor is it a matter of necessity that I help the Swarajists in my own poor way. I dislike the Councils programme but I see that the majority of educated Indians cannot do without the Councils programme. The most forward amongst them will gladly retire if they had a fiercely active political propaganda. They cannot be satisfied with the mere constructive programme. It is too slow for them. I recognise the honesty of this attitude. And as one wanting to harness all the forces for the good of the country and realising that if one goes to the Councils one may even there advance the constructive programme and offer dignified opposition to such measures as are detrimental to the welfare of the country I choose for my help that party which best fulfils my conditions.

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*10th September, 1925*

## IS IT OVER-CONFIDENCE?

BY M. K. GANDHI

An esteemed friend, jealous of my reputation for correct conduct asks, how it is that I feel confident of my being right in my latest attitude of whole-hearted support to the Swaraj Party? Have I not made Himalayan blunders? Do I not notice, the friend asks, that many of my no-changer friends are bewildered over what to them appears to be my inconsistency? Might I not be guilty of over-confidence?

I do not think so. For, a man of truth must ever be confident, if he has also equal need to be diffident. His devotion to truth demands the fullest confidence. His consciousness of the fallibility of human nature must make him humble and therefore ever ready to retrace his steps immediately he discovers his error. It makes no difference to his confidence that he has previously made Himalayan blunders. His confession and penance make him, if anything, stronger for future

action. Discovery of errors makes the votary of truth more cautious of believing things and forming conclusions, but once he has made up his mind, his confidence must remain unshaken. His errors may result in men's reliance upon his judgments being shaken, but he must not doubt the truth of his position once he has come to a conclusion. It should further be borne in mind that my errors have been errors of calculation and judging men, not in appreciating the true nature of truth and Ahimsa or in their application. Indeed these errors and my prompt confessions have made me surer, if possible, of my insight into the implications of truth and Ahimsa. For I am convinced that my action in suspending Civil Disobedience at Ahmedabad, Bombay and Bardoli has advanced the cause of India's freedom and world's peace. I am convinced that because of the suspensions we are nearer Swaraj than we would have been without, and this I say in spite of despair being written in thick black letters on the horizon. Such being my deep conviction, I cannot help being confident of my present position as regards Swarajists and other matters. It is traceable to one source only, a lively understanding of the implications of truth and Ahimsa.

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*1st October, 1925*

## THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The transfer of power into the Swarajist's hands was completed by the All India Congress Committee at Patna. The resolutions were keenly debated and on the whole with the greatest self-restraint. The majorities for the different parts of the resolution were not always as large as I had expected or desired; so as to warrant a change in the constitution of a parent body by its subordinate. But I feel that I consulted the best interests of the country in allowing the resolutions. I have admitted before now that the making of the change in the

constitution was outside the ordinary jurisdiction of the All-India Congress Committee and that it was of the nature of a rebellion. But I hold that it is the duty of every institution jealous of its reputation courageously to face such a crisis if it is convinced that the rebellion is needed for the existence or welfare of the institution itself. It was for that reason that I invited the Committee in the first instance to decide whether a crisis had arisen justifying a change in the constitution without waiting for the Congress session. The majority in favour of an immediate change was overwhelming. I was not therefore insistent upon similar majorities in connection with votes for the resolution itself. It now remains for the Congress either to endorse the action of the All-India Congress Committee or to censure it by rejecting it or even to censure the action even while accepting its decision, it being an accomplished fact. It was suggested by one or two members that censure was an impossible thing because the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee was to be enforced immediately and that therefore those who would come to the Congress would come naturally under the new franchise and those who benefited by it could hardly be expected to censure the action of their benefactor. Such however need not be the case. If the change made by the Committee is resented on pure constitutional grounds, even men who may take advantage of the benefit conferred may still very properly condemn the unconstitutional action of the Committee. They may admit the advisability of the change but repudiate the right of the All-India Congress Committee to make it under any circumstance whatsoever.

As to the substance of the change made there is really nothing drastic in it. No interest is injured. No single person is disfranchised. No single party is in a worse position than it was before the change. Non-co-operators need not complain, because non-co-operation as a national policy has been suspended. The constructive programme remains unaffected. Handspinning and Khaddar still remain part of the national programme. The Council programme which was

being worked by the Swaraj Party in the name of the Congress will now be worked by the Congress through the Swaraj Party. This may be called a distinction without a difference. Those who put spinning before the political programme and those who believe in spinning to the exclusion of any political programme strictly so called, are not injured because they have a separate organisation for its development and because hand-spinning still remains as an alternative part of the franchise and the use of Khaddar on Congress and other public occasions still remains obligatory. Nor are the other parties who are outside the Congress adversely affected by it. Whereas under the Belgaum resolution they had to convert or negotiate with both No-changers and Swarajists, now they have only to convert or confer with the Swarajists. The change therefore in every respect extends the right of representation and makes the union of all the parties less difficult than it was. No Congress can possibly resent a change in extension of popular liberty. What is more, the change in my opinion is in accordance with the requirements of those who have hitherto been identified with the Congress. For them perhaps, it does not go far enough. I should be sorry if such is the fact.

The discussion at the meeting betrayed on the part of some members a fear that the delivery of the yarn subscription directly to the All-India Spinners' Association might result in an unscrupulous exploitation of professional spinners, or worse still in dishonest practices to flood the Congress, thus bringing about an undesirable state of things and defeating the very end sought to be accomplished by the resolution. This fear was felt not if the yarn was to be delivered at the centre, but if it was to be delivered to the provincial agencies. There was no difficulty in meeting this objection. The clause in the constitution of the Association requiring Congress members who wanted to spin rather than pay a four anna subscription to send their yarn to the Central offices was inserted to meet this difficulty. My own view is certainly not to flood the Congress with 'spinners' and thus to convert it once more into a purely or

predominantly spinners' organisation to the exclusion of Council politics. I would like it to be so undoubtedly, but that can only happen when those to whom the transfer has been made become converted to spinning out and out. And that can only happen by the spinners' action not within the Congress but without it. If handspinning has any intrinsic vitality and becomes so universal as to bring us within a measurable distance of excluding foreign cloth—and that can happen only by incessant and exclusive effort on the part of those who believe in spinning out and out, working out their belief in practice—the Swarajists will become complete converts. My strong advise, therefore, is that those who are at present spinning members of the Congress may, if they wish, continue to be so by sending their yarn to the central office. No canvassing need be made by them for increasing the strength of membership through handspinning. They may work to the utmost of their ability to enrol as many members of the Association as possible. And if we can get a large number of voluntary spinners drawn not from the professional class, but from those who spin purely for sacrifice and not for livelihood, it would be an achievement that cannot but tell. But at the present moment, and up to the time that all suspicion is set at rest, they should refrain from becoming members of the Congress. I have always held that the National Congress should have no wrangling within its ranks and that there should be no unseemly attempt to capture the Congress. Those who cannot see eye to eye with the policy of the majority should either refrain from fighting to the division point in vital matters, or if their conscience would not allow it they should for the time being retire altogether from the Congress. I will, therefore, urge the fierce non-co-operators who if they remain in the Congress would consider it their duty to fight the Swarajists at every step and stage, to retire from the Congress and build up public opinion, if they so will, from without. They must leave the Swarajists an open field and give them the best opportunity of working out their policy. In my opinion, if they are to



create an impression upon the Government they must have the Congress organisation undisturbed by Non-co-operators.

Hence, in my opinion, wherever the two parties are evenly balanced, Non-co-operators or No-changers should surrender full control to the Swarajists and voluntarily give up offices if they hold any. Where the No-changers are in an overwhelming majority, they should not hamper the Swarajists, and should help them wherever they conscientiously can. In no case, may any Congress Committee put up for the Legislatures candidates that are not selected by the Swarajists or in opposition to them.

One pleasing thing I must not omit to note. There was a decided inclination on the part of the majority to make Kaddar-wear the National dress for all Congressmen. The motion to that end was not passed only when it became clear that it would embarrass the Swaraj Party. But an improvement upon the Belgaum resolution was heartily accepted to the effect that whilst Khaddar was obligatory on Congress and other public occasions it was expected of all Congressmen to wear Khaddar on all the occasions but in no case shall they wear or use foreign cloth.

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*1st October, 1925*

## A. I. C. C. RESOLUTIONS

### THE FRANCHISE

A. In view of the fact that there is a demand from a considerable section in the Congress for a revision of the franchise and there is a general consensus of opinion that having regard to the present situation the franchise should be extended, the All India Congress Committee resolves that Article VII of the Congress Constitution be repealed and replaced by the following:

Article VII. (i) Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of 4 annas per year in advance, or 2000 yards of evenly spun yarn of his or her own spinning,

shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organisation controlled by a Provincial Congress Committee, provided that no person shall be a member of two parallel Congress organisations at one and the same time.

(ii) The yarn subscription mentioned in sub-section (i) shall be sent direct by the spinner to the Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, or to any person nominated by the Secretary in this behalf, and a certificate from the Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, to the effect that he has received 2000 yards of evenly spun yarn of the holder's own spinning as his or her yearly subscription, shall entitle the holder to the membership mentioned in sub-section (i) hereof, provided that for the purpose of checking the accuracy of the returns made by the All-India Spinners' Association, the A. I. C. C., or any P. C. C, or any Sub-Committee thereunder shall have the right to inspect the accounts, the stock and the vouchers of the All-India Spinners' Association or any subordinate organisation thereunder and provided further that in the event of any inaccuracy or error discovered by the inspecting body in the accounts, stock or vouchers examined, the certificates issued by the All-India Spinners' Association in respect of persons with reference to whose membership the accounts have been examined, shall be declared cancelled; provided that the All-India Spinners' Association or the person disqualified shall have the right of appeal to the Working Committee. Any person wishing to spin for the membership of the Congress may, if he or she desires, be supplied, upon due security, with cotton for spinning.

(iii) The yarn of the membership shall be reckoned from the 1st January to 31st December and there shall be no reduction in the subscription to be paid by members joining in the middle of the year.

(iv) No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates of any Committee or Sub-Committee or any Congress organisation, whatsoever or to be elected as such, or to take part in any meeting of the Congress organisation or any Committee or Sub-Committee thereof, if he has not

complied with sub-section (i) hereof or does not wear hand-spun and hand woven Khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business ; the Congress expects Congressmen to wear Khaddar also on all other occasions and in no case shall they wear or use foreign cloth.

(v) All the existing members at the end of the year shall be entitled to remain such up to the 31st January following although they may not have paid their subscription for the new year.

Saving Clause sub-section (i) shall not affect the rights of those who have been already registered as members under the Article repealed provided their membership is otherwise in order, and provided further that those who shall have paid yarn subscription, whether of self-spun or hand-spun yarn upto September 1925, shall remain members for the current year though they may not pay any further yarn.

B. Whereas the Congress in its 39th Session held at Belgaum endorsed an agreement entered into between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshabandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru acting on behalf of the Swarajya Party on the other, whereby the Congress activity was restricted to the Constructive programme mentioned therein and it was provided that "the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swarajya Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organisation and that for such work the Swarajya Party should make its own rules and administer its own funds " and,

Whereas subsequent events have shown that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country and that the Congress should henceforth be a predominantly political body !

It is resolved that the Congress do now take up and carry on all such political work as may be necessary in the interest of the country and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and funds of Congress, save and except such funds and assets as are specially earmarked and such funds and assets

as belong to the All India Khaddar Board and Provincial Khaddar Boards, which shall be handed over with all existing financial obligations to the All India Spinners' Association to be started by Mahatma Gandhi as an integral part of the Congress organisation, but with independent existence and full powers to administer these other funds for the fulfilment of its object.

Provided that the work in the Indian and Provincial Legislatures shall be carried on in accordance with the policy and programme laid down by the Swarajya Party under the constitution framed by the Party and the rules made thereunder subject to such modifications made by the Congress as may be found necessary from time to time for the purpose of carrying out the said policy.

#### THE CHINESE SITUATION.

This meeting of the All India Congress Committee expresses its sympathy with the Chinese in their struggle against alien domination of their land.

This meeting further records its most emphatic protest against the despatch of Indian soldiers by the Government of India to suppress the Chinese national movement of freedom.

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*29th October, 1925*

#### INTERROGATORIES

By M. K. GANDHI

Whilst I was at Lucknow the sub-editor of the *Indian Daily Telegraph* handed me some interrogatories for my answer. They are rather interesting. I therefore reproduce the most important of them with my answers.

I. Do you purpose to launch mass civil disobedience within one year, or within any specified time?

I entertain no present hope of being able to launch mass civil disobedience within any measurable distance of time.

2. Do you believe in the dictum 'the end justifies the means'?

I have never believed in the dictum.

3. A year ago it was reported that you intended to launch civil disobedience, and once launched you would go on with it, even if sporadic violence occurred. Absolute non-violence being impossible on the part of the masses, will you now take the risk of a modicum of evidence (minimum, so far as it lies in your power) and launch civil disobedience?

What I said a year ago and what I wish to repeat now is that whatever step I may take now will be, I hope, not conditional, but absolute and irrevocable. Whenever I have suspended civil disobedience I have done so not by reason of any outbreak of violence, but upon the discovery of such violence as had been initiated or encouraged by Congressmen who should have known better. Any outbreak of violence would not have brought about suspension, as, for instance, the Moplah outbreak. But Chauri Chaura did for the simple reason that persons connected with the Congress were involved in it.

4. In the Calcutta Riot case, you laid the blame at the door of the Hindus. The Marwadi Association or some Hindu organisation challenged your verdict and produced evidence to prove the guilt of the Moslems in giving sufficient cause for provocation to the Hindus. You promised to publicly modify your verdict if you found your previous opinion mistaken. Will you now publicly modify your previous verdict?

I have seen nothing to modify my previous verdict.

5. You have consented to accept address from the Municipal Board (which is now in the hands of the Swarajist Party) but you have avoided address from the Hindu Sabha. Why do you make this invidious distinction against a body which represents the Hindu community, to which you belong?

I have never avoided address from the Lucknow Hindu

Sabha. On the contrary I told them that I would gladly accept their address when I paid a visit to Lucknow. The Swarajist Municipality approached me later and pressed me to accept its address even whilst I was passing through Lucknow. The Hindu Sabha might have done likewise. There was no question of avoidance. I simply thought that the Sabha would not want to present me with an address whilst I was merely passing through Lucknow specially as the Sabha had desired to discuss with me the Hindu-Muslim tension in Lucknow. It will be remembered that I gladly accepted the Hindu Sabha address in Sitapur.

6. The Aminabad Park Arati-Namaz-question is hanging fire for more than a year. Will you kindly give your decision, if both parties promise to abide by it?

I have dealt with this matter in my U. P. Notes.

7. As a Hindu, what is your candid opinion about the question?

I have no opinion, as I do not know the facts. If I had made up my mind beforehand I could not consent to arbitrate even if both the parties were willing to abide by award.

8. Hindus never object to moslem music during Mohurram, or at any time. Why should Moslems object to Hindu music? Are the Hindus not entitled to safeguard their religious rights by every means?

This question deals with two questions of fact about which I know nothing. As to the third part of the question Hindus are entitled to defend their religious rights not by every means but by every truthful, and in my opinion, non-violent means.

9. At Patna two kidnapped Hindu girls were produced before you. As a Hindu, what steps you advise the Hindus to take against the growing evil of kidnapping throughout India?

I dealt with this delicate question last week.

10. Are not the Hindus justified in organising themselves, not for any aggressive action against moslems or

others, but for safeguarding their religious rights and stamping out such evils as kidnapping etc. as also for the physical, social, moral and material advancement of the Hindu community?

I do not suppose any body can possibly object to the organisation such as the question mentions. I certainly do not object.

II. Maulana Shaukat Ali sent a message through you to the Bihar Khilafat Conference. If Lala Lajpat Rai or Pandit Malaviya send a message through you to a Hindu Conference, will you have any objection to it?

Maulana Shaukat Ali never sent through me any message to the Bihar Khilafat Conference; but if he had, I would certainly have carried any message from him, provided it was unobjectionable. And I should certainly carry out a similar commission entrusted to me by Pandit Malaviyaji or Lala Lajpat Rai.

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*19th November, 1925*

## A TRUE CONGRESSMAN

BY M. K. GANDHI

I. "You do not know what we (Congressmen) are. I will tell you. One well-known Congressman went to a comfortable house. He was not invited there. He had not written either to the owner. On reaching there he was asked by the owner: 'Where are you going to stay?' This Congressman said, 'Here of course, where else do you think?' The owner was unprepared for this favour. But he had to make the best of the job though he never omitted to speak about the manners of this guest who had imposed himself upon him. He even made opportunities for delicately insulting this Congressman who was too far gone to notice the insults. I must tell you that the unwilling host was not a Congressman."

2. "Another Congressman imposed himself on a Congress worker without notice. He had a large company with him and felt mightily offended when he could not get all the convenience that he had expected. We Congressmen have come to think so much of ourselves that we presume we have a right to demand and receive the best service without the least cost."

These incidents were related to me by an earnest Congress worker with so much pain that I thought I should place them on record and draw a moral from them. Let no one, however, wear the cap unless it fits him. The incidents have been purposely defaced. I do not know the other side. No one therefore need waste his time in a vain effort to identify them.

The thing is to avoid copying examples quoted. A Congressman to be true must be above suspicion. Let him remember that he is out to gain Swaraj by 'legitimate and peaceful means'. We have been a long time getting it. The obvious inference is that we have not at all adopted even among our mutual intercourse means that can bear scrutiny. Indeed a correspondent once suggested that whilst we must be truthful and peaceful towards opponents, we need not be like that in our mutual dealings. But experience shows that we cannot be truthful and peaceful on some occasions and for some people only, if we are not so on all occasions. And if we will not be considerate towards one another, we shall not be considerate to the world outside. All the prestige acquired by the Congress will be gone, if we are not scrupulously clean in our dealings within or without in every detail. Pounds will take care of themselves, if we could but take care of the pennies.

A true Congressman is a true servant. He ever gives, ever wants service. He is easily satisfied so long as his own comfort is concerned. He is always content to take a back seat. He is never communal or provincial. His country is his paramount consideration. He is brave to a fault because he has shed all earthly ambition, fear of Death himself. And he



is generous because he is brave, forgiving because he is humble and conscious of his own failings and limitations.

If such Congressmen are rare, Swaraj is far off and we must revise our creed. The fact that we have not got Swaraj as yet is proof presumptive that we have not as many true Congressmen as we want. Be that, however as it may, if I have placed on record the ugly incidents which can be multiplied, I must bear grateful testimony to the fact that there are nameless Congressmen no doubt few today but daily growing in number who fulfil all the tests I have mentioned. They are unknown to fame. It is well that they are. Work will be impossible if they wanted to shine in the limelight and expected honourable mention in Congress dispatches. Those who obtain even Victoria Crosses are by no means and necessarily always the bravest humanitarians. To the end of time the real heroes of the world will be never known. Their deeds remain imperishable. They are their own reward. Such men are the real scavengers without whom the earth will be a plague spot not worth living in. It has been my lot to meet such men and women in the Congress ranks. But for them the Congress will not be an institution to which it would be a pride to belong. There is no doubt at the present moment a hunt for offices and an unhealthy competition to capture the Congress. It is a disease which has come to the surface and it is bound to give place in the course of time to health. That will not happen if the Congress becomes anything but an institution for hard, honest and selfless toil.

Let the Congress be ever so democratic, but democracy must not be brag and bluster, a passport to receiving service from people. If *vox popule* is to be *vox dei* it must be the voice of honesty, bravery, gentleness, humility and complete self-sacrifice. A woman is to guide the Congress next year. Woman is nothing if she is not self-sacrifice and purity personified. Let us men and women of the Congress humble ourselves, purify our hearts and be worthy representatives of the dumb millions.

*24th December, 1925*

## ON THE EVE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The forthcoming session of the Congress will be a landmark in its history. An Indian woman will for the first time enjoy the highest honour in the gift of the nation. 'Despised we may be. Slaves we may be. Helpless we may be. The world may, if it chooses, therefore think nothing of the national assembly. But for us a president of our assembly must be all in all. That unique honour will be hers this year as a matter of right. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu has a world reputation as a poetess. From the time she entered public life she has never forsaken it. She has made herself accessible to all. She has ever been found ready for any service that the nation has demanded of her. Unity is her creed. Bravery is written in her face, Unperturbed she wandered about the streets of Bombay during the riots of 1921, reproving the mad crowds for their blind fury. If readiness to respond to every call at a moment's notice even at the risk of one's health be deemed sacrifice, she has shown herself to be capable of great sacrifice. Those who were with her during her African tour have told me of her unwearied toil under difficult circumstances—a toil that would put many a young man to shame. Her mission to South Africa showed her to be an ambassador of high merit. In the midst of strange surroundings and able statesmanship, she proved herself equal to the task. If her tour did not bring tangible relief to our afflicted countrymen, it shows not her incapacity but the difficult nature of the problem. No one could have done better. I have no manner of doubt that we could not have superseded Sarojini Devi without being guilty of a gross breach of duty. It was enough to have done so last year.

It is, therefore, our duty to give her all the support in our power to make her task easy and her burden bearable. She is faced with delicate and difficult problems. I need not enumerate

them. They are both internal and external. Our internal difficulties are perhaps greater than the external. The battle is three-fourths won if we can remove them root and branch. Woman is the supreme mistress in domestic matters. Can Sarojini Devi then succeed in removing our domestic difficulties where men have failed? But woman though she is, unsupported by us she cannot succeed. Every Congressman should regard it his duty to take his due share in the solution. External difficulties may be dealt with by experts. But we are or should be all experts in dealing with internal problems. We can all work to bring peace and cease to quarrel and fight with one another. We can all become patriotic and cease to be parochial. We can all honestly fulfil the obligations that we may impose on ourselves by our own resolutions. Without our co-operation she can do little. With our unstinted support, she can do things which she as woman and poetess is specially fit for. May God bless her with all the strength and wisdom she will need in the discharge of her arduous office.

*7th January, 1926*

## THE ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

Only those who are devoid of all imagination could after witnessing the demonstration at Cawnpore during the Congress week say that the influence of the Congress was on the wane. The belittling process commenced with its birth. It has however survived forty summers and promises to survive many more.

The demonstration began with the dazzling splendour that greeted the President on her arrival at Cawnpore. The feeble voice of protest was hushed in the midst of the grateful shouts of thousands who had gathered to do honour to the first Indian woman who was to preside over the deliberations of the great

national assembly. The roads were one vast mass of beaming human faces. Every balcony was occupied by the women of Cawnpore who were eager to see the face of Shrimati Sarojini Devi. The merchants vied with one another in making the decorations effective and striking. The Congress ground was packed to overflowing. The pandal was filled in the opening day. No session had so many European visitors as this. The delegates were attentive and yielded implicit obedience to the chair. The President by her tact, perseverance, punctuality and sweetness combined with firmness came up to all the expectations that were raised of her by friends and severely disappointed her critics who had prophesied a complete failure. Her address—the shortest yet written by any President of the Congress—was a prose-poem. In the brief space of twelve octavo pages she had summarised the struggles and the aspirations of the people in whose name she spoke. True, there was nothing new in the address. She had bargained to give nothing new. She had sketched no policy. That was left by design to the leader of the Swaraj Party, Pandit Motilal Nehru. Her virtue lay in her unobtrusiveness, in her impartiality in her allowing herself to be led even while she was leading. The secret of her success lay in her womanliness which she let her people see in every act of hers.

Of the important resolutions nothing much need be said in these columns. They cover all the important matters that have agitated the country during the past twelve months. The South African resolution was the first in point of time and immediate importance. Whatever may be said to the contrary I hold that the proposed bill is in breach of the Smuts-Gandhi agreement of 1914. For the royal veto there are many precedents. If it may not be used under any circumstance whatsoever, it should be part of the royal instructions. If it may be used under certain circumstances, that circumstance will undoubtedly arise when and if the preposterous bill passes the Union Legislature.

The resolution about the Congress franchise and the

debate in the Subjects Committee demonstrate the growing popularity of Khaddar. It is clear that the Swarajists may not leave Khaddar and still retain their hold on the electorate. Indeed the tendency in the Subjects Committee was towards stiffening the Khaddar condition. If it has the supreme economic and national value that is claimed for it, it is properly part of the franchise qualifications. One has a right to hope that the Congress having passed the resolution by an overwhelming majority, the members will loyally and conscientiously fulfil the condition imposed by themselves. No inquisition is necessary where members are willing to observe common honesty.

The Councils resolution is an elaborate affair. It is a clear notice to the Government and an equally clear indication to the electors as to what they are to expect from the Swaraj Party. The emphasis laid on Civil Disobedience is, in my opinion, quite appropriate. No nation can possibly march forward without a sanction to enforce its will. The reiteration of faith in Civil Disobedience means that the representatives of the nation have no faith in an armed rebellion. Civil Disobedience may be a far cry. It may be nearer than many imagine. Time is irrelevant. Cultivation of the spirit of nonviolent resistance is everything. So long therefore as the Congress believes in Civil Disobedience and its will remains unenforced, it must keep the former before the people and teach them that it is a complete and effective substitute for armed rebellion and that the latter is out of the question for Indian conditions and the former perfectly possible if people or rather the volunteers could be persuaded to observe and enforce self-restraint under the gravest provocations.

So far as the remaining in or the going out of the Councils is concerned, Swarajists must be regarded the best judges of their own position and the condition of the Councils. They are the experts and the others must not obstruct them if they will carry out the Patna resolution now confirmed by the Congress.

Superficial observers may regard the split in the Swarajist

camp as unfortunate. Unfortunate in a way it undoubtedly is. We would all like perfect agreement among us if such was possible. But surely it is not unfortunate that we should bravely and honestly confess our fundamental differences and work them out. It is the surest sign of growth. We will not attain Swaraj by mechanical agreements which we do not mean. In a vast country like ours, there is room enough for many schools of thought. And so long as they respect one another and honestly push forward their views, the people can only gain by their presentation. Forced suppression of one's views, is a sign of decay and violence. I would warn the public therefore against being pessimistic over the so-called split in the Swarajist's camp.

Then there are the resolutions about the Bengal Ordinance prisoners, the Gurdwara prisoners and the Burma measures aimed at the Indian settlers. They are all an indication of our present impotence and an additional count in the indictment against the Government.

The resolution about the use of Hindustani is a great advance in public opinion. It is undoubtedly cruel to the majority of members of the A. I. C. C. or the delegates that our proceedings should be still largely conducted in English. We must arrive at a final decision some day. When we do, it must cause some inconvenience, some heart-burning for a time. But the sooner we begin to conduct our proceedings in Hindustani the better it will be for national growth.

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*1st April, 1926*

## MY POLITICAL PROGRAMME

BY M. K. GANDHI

I gratefully reproduce the following letter received from American friends accompanying a gift of 145 dollars :

"The signers of the accompanying note are a group of Bostonians and two Westerners who owe you much.

Accept the gift we venture to send as a very inadequate expression of our will to ally ourselves with your work. Small as they are, for some of us the gifts have meant sacrifices. We should be glad to have the money used in that part of your work which most directly appeals to us, that in the interests of the untouchables and of Hindu-Muslim unity. Dean Simonds and some of the other signers feel, like Professor Hocking, too little informed as to conditions in India to be quite ready to accept in full your political programme. We all, however, heartily wish to have a part in the work I have mentioned.

"God, who is with you, will surely bring to India the better day of which you are the prophet. Will you not pray sometimes for this America, no less in need of His help?"

I have told them that in accordance with their wishes the amount would be evenly divided between the two activities. But on receiving the letter I could not help feeling sad that even among extremely sympathetic and cultured American friends the movement is so little understood. When, therefore, American friends visit me and ask me how they can help India, I tell them to study the movement not superficially, not from newspapers, not as globe-trotters in a hurry, but as serious students by accurate observation and by gleaning information from all sides and all parties.

My political programme is extremely simple. If the donors had added the spinning wheel to untouchability and unity, they would have practically completed it. My opinion is becoming daily more and more confirmed that we shall achieve our real freedom only by effort from within *i. e.*, by self-purification and self-help, and therefore by the strictest adherence to truth and non-violence. Civil Disobedience is no doubt there in the back-ground. But Civil Disobedience asks for and needs not a single farthing for its support. It needs and asks for stout hearts with a faith that will not flinch from any danger and will shine the brightest in the

face of severest trial. Civil Disobedience is a terrifying synonym for suffering. But it is better often to understand the terrible nature of a thing if people will truly appreciate its benignant counterpart. Disobedience is a right that belongs to every human being and it becomes a sacred duty when it springs from civility or, which is the same thing, love. The anti-untouchability reformers are offering Civil Disobedience against entrenched orthodoxy. Protagonists of Hindu-Muslim unity are resisting with their whole soul those who will divide classes and sects. Just as there may be this resistance against those who will hinder the removal of untouchability or promotion of unity, so must there be resistance against a rule that is stunting India's manhood. It is daily grinding down the starving millions of this vast country. Heedless of future consequences the rulers are pursuing a course of conduct regarding intoxicating drinks and drugs that must, if it remains unchecked, corrupt the toilers of the land and make posterity ashamed of us who are making use of this immoral source of revenue for educating our children. But the condition of this terrible resistance—resistance against orthodoxy, resistance against enemies of unity, and resistance against Government—is possible of fulfilment only by a strong, and if need be a long course of self-purification and suffering.

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# CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME



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*17th April, 1924*

### ‘THE WHISPER OF THE WHEEL’

The following enthusiastic description of the possibilities of the spinning wheel cannot fail to be of general interest. The writer is a U. P. graduate and is himself a practised spinner. He does not wish his name to be advertised.—M. K. G.

“I am a simple thing and anybody can understand my mechanism. I can be bought for a rupee or two. I am portable and easily accessible to all. I am much lighter than the grinding stone, therefore I am most popular with the fair sex. I am in demand at the time of marriages. My production satisfies the religious want of the Pandits because I am always sacred. I can give bread to the millions of straving villagers of India, can clothe the farmers, can give a livelihood to beggars, can give a dignified profession to the fallen sisters and those whose modesty is otherwise exposed to the assaults of lustful persons. I am in the habit of demolishing “devils’ workshops” by keeping busy all idle men’s minds, if they care to turn me. I feed the weavers, the carders, the iron-smiths and the carpenters, I can save the heavy drainage of India that has been sapping her very life blood. I can effect real unity between the different communities of India by making them interdependent, I can ameliorate the conditions of the untouchables by making it easy to find a market for the yarn produced by them, I can establish real peace in India by teaching its inhabitants self-respect and self-reliance and thus render it absolutely impossible for other nations to come to India with the idea of exploiting her. I can introduce simplicity in life and make the opulent condescend to talk with the mill hands. I can destroy the pride of the capitalists by abolishing the factory system and thus putting an end

to the ever multiplying miseries of the labourers, and by being a meance to ambition and love of aggrandisement. I am thus a harbinger of peace and restorer of financial health to India and impartial distributor of wealth.

But to school students I am something more ; I am an examiner of their abilities, I am a barometer to their nature. Give me to a rash boy and I will tell all at once that he is such, because his yarn will be untwisted and irregular. Place me in the hands of a serious boy : I will at once know that he is promising, because his yarn will be regular, and indicative of a balanced hand.

I am not merely an examiner ; I am an instructor too. I can train the mind of a boy (if he turns me daily), so well that he will be a good surgeon if he goes to the George Hospital Lucknow with a certificate from me. His operation will mostly be successful and his judgment most accurate. I warrant a regular spinner can be a good mathematician because the same law governs both the sciences. It would be no exaggeration to say that spinning is practical mathematics. If you err, your mistake will at once be detected.

Just as bluntness in the edge of a razor spoils a shave, just as caustic acid spoils a picture and just as adoration without faith is meaningless, in the same way no amount of coaching is of any avail without concentration which the youths of these days so utterly lack. I am a specialist in training the boys in concentration and I claim to do immense good in this direction to the boy who befriends me."

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*The following notes by Mahatma Gandhi appeared in "Young India"*

*15th May, 1924*

## LIVING ON SPINNING AND WEAVING

In sending an account of his tour in Chittagong Acharya Roy says:—

I am enclosing an account of a tour in Chittagong where I went recently. You will be glad to learn that the field is very good there in the interior and it only requires an organisation to develop it.

While on tour I met with a gentleman who, I was given to understand, was an Engineer. He has become a cultivator now ploughing his own field, sowing and reaping. His household needs are met by the manual labour of the members of his family who spin and weave for themselves.

You need not reply to this letter. I know you are busy with important correspondence. I only let you know something about Chittagong which will please you. You are having plenty of worry—a little good news may act as a little dose of medicine during your convalescence.

What the engineer family is reported to be doing can be done by every Congress worker, whether lawyer, school-master or other. He need not then worry about other Congress work. The engineer is, I am sure, doing far more successful propaganda than many an orator without a living faith in khaddar, thundering to the people on its virtue.

The report sent by Dr. Roy is equally instructive. It shows that hundreds of Mussalman women have been doing spinning for generations. They gin and card their own cotton. They weave their own yarn. The cotton is all brought from the neighbouring hills. The report states that the cotton is all bought up by merchants for export. Is it not tragic to think that whilst there are thousands of spinners who can make use of cotton they should be left idle and cotton should be sent

abroad to be spun and woven there and then brought back to us as cloth? Fortunately Dr. Roy and his workers are making strenuous effort to have sufficient cotton stored for the requirements of local spinners.

The report also describes the carding bow used in those parts and says that it came out victorious in a competition with the Bardoli bow. The gut of the Suchia bow (the local bow is named after a Chittagong village named Suchia) is made of fibres of pineapple leaves and is supposed to last a week. It is surprising with what simple and cheap materials the finest processes can be gone through.

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*22nd May, 1934*

### KHADI UMBRELLAS

A correspondent who is a thorough believer in khaddar asks what one should do for umbrellas. I do not regard umbrellas as clothing and personally I should not hesitate to use a foreign umbrella. But I have seen umbrellas covered with khaddar. I know too that it is possible by smearing khaddar with water-proof composition to make it water-proof. It may be an expensive process but a determined man will not count the cost. I know also a poor man's umbrella. Prisoners are not allowed the use of umbrellas except convict warders on out-door duty. We had in Yerawada very useful and more effective protection against rain by tucking one corner into another of a gunny-bag and hanging it loosely on the head.

The correspondent is also puzzled over the use of silk dhoties for sacred wear. For me khadi is more sacred than silk foreign or home-spun for the simple reason that silk manufacture is confined to a few thousands; yarn manufacture extends to millions. But the movement does permit one to use homespun khaddar. Here again coarse woollen dhoties are suggested as a perfect substitute for silk. It is not

without difficulty that one can procure hand-spun silk and then there is always doubt whether the silk yarn is foreign or home-spun.

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*5th June, 1924*

### THE WHEEL TO THE RESCUE

The following letter from Babu Bhupendra Narayan Sen cannot fail to interest the reader.

“Dudondo is a village in the subdivision of Arambagh district Hooghly and is about 7 miles west of Raja Ram Mohun Roy's birthplace, Radhanagar. In June 1922, there occurred a severe flood in the river Darakeshwar and my friend Sj. Prafulla Chandra Sen was deputed by the Hooghly District Congress Committee for relief work in the flooded area. When Prafulla proposed to distribute charkha to insure against famine which generally attends such flood, he was ridiculed by the Flood Relief Committee. Undaunted, my friend promised that he would make the charkha a success even in such a backward N. C. O. district as Hooghly. With three co-workers, he began to tramp from villager's door to door with a bag of cotton, with some charkhas and their implements. The younger generation laughed to his face, the older people wisely shook their heads and remarked that there was time when charkha's musical hum was a feature of village life. At last, they succeeded in introducing a dozen charkhas and began to feed the spinners regularly with cotton and wages. In order that the spinners might store sufficient yarn for weaving their own clothes, Prafulla used to give them cotton instead of wages i.e, for 5 tolas of yarn given by a spinner he gave 10 tolas of cotton in return and to the needy he gave spinning wages at 3 pies per tola of yarn spun, carding being done by the spinners themselves. The earnest and steady spinning by the said twelve spinners drew the attention of young and old alike. The people, who scoffed at charkha, now wondered at the beautiful Khaddar saris



which the spinners had woven out of their own hand-spun yarn and began to envy the spinners who earned such wages. They now began to request my friend for charkhas promising that they would ply them regularly. The number increased and in 3 or 4 months the number of spinners was hundred and my friend's abilities were put to serve test to keep them all going and the nucleus of our organisation was thus established. The Mahomedan ladies were the first to revive this charkha culture and their Hindu sisters are also following in their wake. The present number of spinners is more than two hundred.

"My own conversion to this Khadi programme i.e. village-work, may interest you a little. I was working as secretary Jorabagan Congress Committee, Calcutta. At the invitation of my friend Prafulla, I came to this place to see him working and it is here and here alone I became convinced of the potentialities of the charkha in the building up of our national life. From daybreak to sunset, people old and young came with yarns to get double quantity of slivers or to sell it for meeting the weaver's demand. Older spinners were all clad in Khaddar saris woven out of their own yarn. Their hunger-stricken faces had now sparkles of joy. I began to chat with them and learnt that my friend's work had kept the wolf from their doors, that women who is to beg for their sustenance, were now well-off; that they no longer quarrelled among themselves because they had now no idle time left after carding and spinning; that their husbands could not now ill-treat them as they were considerably contributing to the family fund; and lastly but not the least, their *izzat* was saved. I could learn all these things because I was introduced to them as a Khadi worker: otherwise nothing on earth could have moved these *purdahnashin* ladies to talk so intimately with a stranger. Near about sunset, the male population of the village began to arrive at our centre and they came daily to hear my friend's conversations on various topics. They all expressed their deepest sympathy for our work and anxiously prayed that it might continue for ever. This evening gathering made me at once remember one of your

beautiful sayings 'Non-co-operation with the Government for more co-operation with the people' and I thought that this was the rightest way to do it. In short I could not resist myself the temptation of serving these poor innocent people; I gave up my town Congress work and came down here. The more we are becoming familiar with the village-life, the more convinced we become of the truth of Bardoli programme and we now believe that we shall want nothing more if we can only work out this programme for the rest of our lives.

"Along with Khadi work there has begun national Education, arbitration and social service. We have now a separate propaganda department which publishes a litho-weekly namely 'Congress Sambad' containing expositions on non-violent non-co-operation, Khaddar, untouchability etc. We have named this organisation as 'Satyagraha sangha' and it has under its control :—

1. One spinning centre at Duadondo.
2. One weaving centre at Baradongal 7 miles north of Duadondo.
3. One national school at Bandar 4 miles south of Duadondo.

We received help from the following sources mainly :—

Flood Relief Committee, Hoogly-Rs. 300/-

Bengal Provincial Congress Swadeshi Board-Rs. 500/-

Jorabagan Congress Flood Trust fund-Rs. 1500/-

Our assets are :—

(a) Stock of yarn, Khadi, cotton, cotton seeds-Rs. 1200/-

(b) Looms with weavers ... .. Rs. 200/-

(c) Spinning wheels-distributed ... .. Rs. 350/-

The other day Sj. Harakchand Motichand brother of Sj. Jivanlal, aluminium merchant, came to see our national school and the spinning centre. He expressed satisfaction at our work and has helped us with Rs. 200/- for buying the land on which the national school at Bandar was situated and with Rs. 100/- for building our 'ashram'. For the present we are housed in the bungalow of Mr. J. C. Hazra, a practising barrister

of the Calcutta High Court. Mr. Hazra came here during the last Easter holidays. He agreed that the Bardoli programme was the only programme for our country."

The letter shows what a little organisation can do and how easily the people take to the wheel when it is presented to them in a workable form. The *charkha* will turn those who are forced to beg for food into self-respecting artisans and will knit together the literate and the illiterate, the poor and the rich, as nothing else will.

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### LUXURY NOT POWER.

Barodada writes thus from Shantiniketan :

"The reason why you exhort us to concentrate all our energy on the constructive programme is simply this. You want us to produce by our own hands the necessities of life, and thereby gain power. If we once get the initial power simply to live, we can gradually gain more power to live comfortably afterwards. But if we take only that which Government pleases to give us, we will get something no doubt, but will not gain power, and this will become weaker and weaker every day. For, as long as power remains with the Government, we will be at its mercy. It is natural that the Government will look after its own interest and we will look after our own. It is foolish to expect that the Government will give us power to nullify its own power of doing anything it likes. It is ready to give us the materials of luxury when the great masses are suffering from want of food and clothing. It will not part with the least of its power, unless forced by circumstances. That power is exerted mainly for its own interest, and by no means for the real well-being of the Indian masses."

Is it not only too true that the towns buy their luxuries at the expense of the poor whilst all the power resides in the hands of a government totally irresponsible and unresponsive to the people ?

## LUXURY AND LAZINESS

A gentleman has sent me a long letter on the difficulties surrounding Khaddar propaganda. I copy the relevant parts of that letter.

"There is much spinning in our province. It is no exaggeration when I say that every lady in our village is a spinner. Even little girls know and practise the art. Weavers are in abundance in this province. A large quantity of Khaddar can be produced in this province. When I see the vast field of work for Khaddar production, I feel that I should work and work hard. But when I come to the Khaddar Depot of our Congress Committee, I find very few people buying our cloth. People who had begun weaving Khaddar have begun to use mill yarn cloth or some even foreign cloth.

The Congress appealed to the sentiments of the people. They discarded foreign cloth and some even burnt them. They adopted Khaddar. But its inherent defects became apparent. The result is that they do not like to wear it now. The defects are:—

1. The stuff is very heavy; the ladies do not tolerate it.
2. On account of its weight, it is not easy to wash.
3. It is not a children's cloth, for their clothing requires constant washing and it is very difficult to do so in case of Khaddar.
4. It has got no variety and we cannot give fast colours to it.
5. It catches dust.
6. It is dearer than the mill cloth. We purchase hand-spun yarn one pound in a rupee, while Indian mill cloth is sold at Amritsar at the same rate, that is one pound per rupee.

The rich people do not like to wear this cloth as it does not satisfy their tastes, while the poor cannot afford to

wear it, considering its price, washing charges, and other expenses.

Only the agricultural class in the villages uses it. They get cotton from their fields. Their ladies do the ginning and the spinning. They have to pay for the carding and weaving which is not much as the labour is very cheap in the villages. It is a bye-product for them. By using it they save money which they do not get so easily as the people in the towns do."

The writer is connected with the Khaddar movement and believes in it. It is clear however that his argument is an argument of luxury and laziness. Khadi propaganda certainly cannot succeed where they reign supreme. If we desire Swaraj we must be prepared to work and give up luxurious tastes at least for the time-being. A soldier who is unwilling to give up conveniences cannot fight. India, if it cannot part with the soft and cheap calico in favour of rough Khadi, will certainly not get Swaraj. The Punjab is the best province immediately to displace all mill-cloth. But that the difficulties come from the Punjabis shows how we have fallen. If the Punjabis want fine cloth, the remedy is not to buy mill-cloth but for the Punjabi sisters to spin even as fine yarn as the Andhra sisters. The Andhra spinning gives one all the fineness one can expect. Nor is it a difficult thing to accomplish. Just as if we want fine *chapatis* we must roll them fine and not go elsewhere in search of fine ones, so should we spin fine yarn, if we want fine cloth. The ladies have no right to grumble at the heaviness of their Khaddar, if they are too lazy to spin fine. Khaddar is eminently children's cloth, if we would clothe them for protection and not for show. Khaddar is capable of giving as much variety as mill-cloth. But it requires revival of the original skill of our forefathers. Khaddar is today dearer than mill-cloth because we have not yet put this national cottage-industry on a sound basis. But surely we cannot count the cost if we will be free. Experience of hundreds of Khaddar wearers is that it having simplified their taste, though it is dearer yard per yard, the

quantity required being much less than before. Khaddar wear is undoubtedly cheaper. For the poor people Khaddar need not be dearer because they can grow their own cotton and gin, card, spin and weave it themselves. Closely examined the argument is answered by carrying on a ceaseless propaganda among the Punjabi sisters asking them to spin not below 20 counts. An expert spinner can readjust their spindles so as to enable them to spin higher counts without much extra energy or time being required.

### WHAT IS A SPINNER ?

People often say that they can spin only because they are able to draw the thread. This is however a false notion: A baker is one who bakes bread that can be eaten and digested. And it is not enough if he only knows how to bake. He must know, as he does know, all the processes that flour has to go through and know also its different varieties. Similarly a spinner is one who draws an even and well-twisted thread that can be woven without difficulty. If the thread is under-twisted or over-twisted it is of no use for weaving purposes. And since it is not possible to spin well without good slivers, a spinner ought to know carding and sliver making. He ought also to tell the staples of different varieties of cotton and be able to spin a given count to say 30 counts. And just as a carpenter who cannot sharpen or mend his tools is worthless, so is a spinner worthless who cannot mend his bow or the wheel or who cannot tell a crooked from a straight spindle and who cannot straighten a crooked one. Many leave off spinning because their wheel has got out of order. A spinning examination therefore should in my opinion cover all the points I have raised. The course need not frighten the reader. It is easy enough for those who would apply themselves to the work. The thing is to treat it seriously.

“Next time we meet for a Bhil Conference in Gujarat we must earnestly seek to find a Bhil President and a Bhil Reception Committee, in a Bhil village centre ; and

we who have been taking a leading part this time, must be the invited and welcome guests, who come to listen and to be instructed rather than to teach."

It was in some such way as this, that at the end of the Bhil Conference at Dohad, on May 18th, 1924, I felt obliged to speak. For no one could look on those keenly intelligent Bhil faces, lined with the deep marks and furrows that had been made upon them by daily exposure to sun and wind and rain, and not feel ashamed at the presumption of giving them advice on every point and not rather listening attentively to what they should say about their own affairs. The Non-co-operation movement has come into our midst to purify us of many things. One thing we have completely to unlearn is, that because any one can speak and write fluently he is more educated than one who has had, every day of his life, Nature's own great education in the fields, at the plough, or in the forest. All through the Conference my one great fear was lest we might be proposing improvements, which would be no improvement at all. When I was in the South Seas, in the islands of the Pacific, I found that on certain islands the missionaries, in their zeal, had been so bent upon improving the habits of the native islanders, that these islanders had become actually dying races. Some of the island races indeed had been completely extinguished. We need to take the greatest care that this shall not happen in our newly awakened interest and zeal for the aboriginal races in India.—C. F. A.

(In a private letter Mr. Andrews has rated me for the Khaddar vests and caps he noticed on the beautiful persons of these simple Bhil children. He asks "Why not be satisfied with Khaddar *lungoti* for them?" Amritlal Thakkar can best answer the question. Personally I have developed a partiality for *lungotis*, more so after having seen so many prisoners in *lungotis* only. But the problem before Mr. Thakkar is not quite simple. He is superintendent not of a jail but a school in which he has to cultivate free manhood and free womanhood.

These delightful urchins are great reasoners. "Why is our superintendent in a multiplicity of clothes however uncomfortable they appear to be, and we only in *lungotis*?" The teachers must, if they will answer such posers satisfactorily, wear and eat what they expect their pupils to wear and eat. In the Indian climate a Khaddar vest is certainly a poor exchange for the comfortable *kuchchha*, which is enlarged *lungoti*.

A remarkable passage occurs in Dr. Schweitzer's two new volumes of lectures, called "Civilisation and Ethics." He points out how the new knowledge, which science has given us, may make us in our turn, mechanical in mind rather than creative. In that case, the knowledge will have been purchased too dearly. He then tells the following delightful story about a Chinese gardener, who was also a philosopher. The passage may be found in volume II page 281, and it reads as follows :

"In the writings of Chuang-tzu it is related that when one of Confucius' scholars saw a certain gardener who was making journey after journey to a well with a single bucket in order to fetch water for his flower borders, he asked him whether he would not like to have his labour lightened. "How so?" replied the gardener. The scholar answered. "Take a long wooden lever thick and heavy at one end and thin at the other. In this way it is possible to arrange matters so that the water will be forced up without this constant stopping on your part. That's what they call a draw-well. But the gardener, who was a sage, responded. "I have heard my teachers say, that if any one makes use of machines he gets into the way of doing all his business mechanically, and the man who does his business mechanically gets to have a machine-like heart; but if a man has a machine-like heart in his breast, he has lost his grasp of pure unity, and becomes involved in complexity."

The Non-co-operation movement, with its intense belief in the power of the inner self to achieve wonderful things, has



instinctively turned away from those machine made articles which appear to eliminate human toil and labour, while in reality they only increase them. There is one thing that may be truly said about the Khaddar enterprise, in addition to its economic value,—it brings us back to simplicity and self-reliance. "If a man" says the Chinese gardener-sage "has a machine-like heart in his breast, he has lost his grasp of pure unity, and becomes involved in complexity." The complexity, in which Europe had become involved, undoubtedly led to the Great War.

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*12th June, 1924*

### UNTOUCHABILITY AND SWARAJ

A correspondent gravely writes :—

"The very term 'untouchability' seems to my mind to be an anomaly, because, there generally does not exist any particular class of people called 'touchables'. It is very rarely that one actually and physically touches another, unless necessity demands it. What is usually obtaining in case of those other than the so called 'untouchables', is that one does not mind the approach of another, one does not mind another passing by his side. That is all and the one does not literally and voluntarily 'touch' another. In the same way, if one minds his own business, allowing the 'untouchable' to mind his own, is not the vexed problem solved ?

"I am sure you do not want me to go and actually 'touch' the 'untouchable' in order to remove the sin and if you concede that actual touching is not necessary, what is the purpose in characterising the evil as 'untouchability'? Your use of the term 'untouchability' does imply that its removal consists in physical touching and I am afraid the orthodox objection to the movement is partly due to this. I do not think that I often touch my own brother and as such it is neither necessary nor expedient that I should touch another man, even if I want to solve the problem ; and hence, I think, 'unapproachability'

better connotes the state of things relating to that community. No amount of external embracing will ease the situation, unless the spirit of toleration exists within.

"Next, I am unable to understand the relation between the existence of this evil and the establishment of Swaraj. After all, 'unapproachability' is only one of the many evils of the Hindu society—perhaps a greater evil—and as long as society exists similar evils do exist, as no society is free from evils. How is this an impediment to the obtaining of Swaraj and why do you make its removal a condition precedent to our fitness for Swaraj? Is it not possible for this to be set right when Swaraj is obtained, if not voluntarily, at least by legislation?

"I can very well understand the imperative necessity for permanent Hindu-Muslim unity, as dissensions between these two large communities may be taken advantage of by the Government, who may therefore indefinitely put off granting our demands. I can also understand the social, religious and the humanitarian aspect of the evil of 'untouchability' but I cannot imagine how this can be construed as a political problem, without solving which Swaraj is impossible."

I have no quarrel about the word. I abhor with my whole soul the system which has reduced a large number of Hindus to a level less than that of beasts. The vexed problem would be solved if the poor Panchama, not to use the word 'untouchable', was allowed to mind his own business. Unfortunately he has no mind or business he can call his own. Has a beast any mind or business but that of his master's? Has a Panchama a place he can call his own? He may not walk on the very roads he cleans and pays for by the sweat of his brow. He may not even dress as the others do. The correspondent talks of toleration. It is an abuse of language to say that we Hindus extend any toleration towards our Panchama brothers. We have degraded them and then have the audacity to use their very degradation against their rise.

Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. If the lot of the Panchama is not improved when

we are all suffering, it is not likely to be better under the intoxication of Swaraj. If it is necessary for us to buy peace with the Mussalmans as a condition of Swaraj, it is equally necessary for us to give peace to the Panchama before we can with any show of justice or self-respect talk of Swaraj. I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange 'king log for king stork.' Hence for me the movement of Swaraj is a movement of self-purification.

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### 'CHHOP' OR SPINNING COMPETITION

A Punjabi friend writes thus about spinning competitions that once were universal in the Punjab and which, let us hope will not be allowed to die out. The gentleman sends with it a drawing, made by himself, of sisters at their wheels taking part in one such competition.

"About twenty or twenty-five years ago it was a very common practice in the Punjab among women in villages as well as in towns to hold spinning competitions called *chhops*. Women of all ages participated in the general competition. Even small girls with their little *charkhas* joined as auxiliary forces. The competitors would get up so early as 2 o'clock in the morning and taking an equal weight of carded cotton done into *punis* they all sat to work in right earnest, the competition generally coming to an end at seven or eight to enable them to attend to duties personal and domestic. While working the machines with their hands they sung happy and sacred songs such as the exile of Rama, *virag* of Gopi-Chand, virtuous life of Puran Bhagat, the melodious hum of the *charkha* supplying the music. The healthy and pure atmosphere surrounding the *chhops* can be better imagined than described. Alas, such happy scenes have become now very rare and it is very seldom that one witnesses them."

## LIBERALS AND KHADDAR

A friend belonging to the Liberal Party writes :—

"I have been thinking and discussing the question of Khaddar with my colleagues. I find that there is no difference of opinion as regards the merit of Khaddar, but the hitch arises the moment, they associate the movement for the spread of Khaddar with your declaration that it is a preparation for civil disobedience. If it stood apart and did not form an item of the non-co-operation movement, I think that the support to this propaganda will become wider and more universal."

The prejudice referred to by the writer is as old as non-co-operation. I have tried to show times without number that no one save civil resisters need think of civil disobedience in connection with Khaddar. Civil disobedience has no direct connection with Khaddar. I have led many a battle of civil disobedience before Khaddar was reborn. The civil resisters (say) in the Kaira campaign knew nothing of Khaddar. Even Vallabhbhai's band at Borsad were not pledged to Khaddar. A part from the Congress volunteers, nobody in Borsad was obliged to wear it before he could be enlisted as a civil resister. The reason was obvious. It was not a campaign to establish Swaraj. I have suggested Khaddar as indispensable for civil disobedience for Swaraj for two reasons. The first is that Swaraj I hold to be an impossibility without Khaddar becoming universal in our country. Secondly it is the most efficient aid to mass discipline without which mass civil disobedience is impossible. Liberals and others should realise that the best way to avert civil disobedience is for everybody to take up the constructive programme of the Congress; especially three items: If all of us worked with one mind to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity and universalise hand-spun Khaddar and if all Hindus united to remove the curse of untouchability, Swaraj will be within sight. There are some Englishmen who use Khaddar but they will naturally repudiate even suggestion of sympathy with civil disobedience or non-co-operation.

26th June, 1924

### MACHINE SPINNING Vs. HAND SPINNING

A friend who at one time swore by the spinning wheel says in effect :

“ Your activity is useless. Why are you wasting your body and mind in dishing up old stuff in the pages of *Young India* and *Navajivan* ? I can no longer read them with profit. I have found by experience that the spinning wheel is no use. Do you know that the *charkhas* which people bought in the first wave of enthusiasm are rotting ? They will not pay.

I suggest turning your attention to something better. Substitute hand spinning with machine spinning. Erect a spinning mill in every Taluka. Nationalise the profits. Only patriots should work the mills, not for gain, but for love of the country. Distribute the yarn to the local weavers only. The cloth woven should be confined to the respective Talukas. You thus save waste of time and freight. To start with, organise one Taluka in this manner and you will render great service.”

As the argument is specious and comes from one who has in his own way tried the *charkha*, I propose to examine it for the sake of those who may hold the views that the friend does. The reader does not need to be told that the scheme is as old as the Khadi movement. Like the proverbial bad penny it turns up again and again.

The friend has forgotten the central truth that the wheel furnishes occupation and a small income to the millions who must have an additional income if they are not to starve. It is not possible to put up a handloom in every home. A loom in every village, a *charkha* in every home is the formula. If a spinning mill is put up in every Taluka, it will result in nationalising the exploitation of the many by the few. All cannot be employed in a Taluka mill. Moreover, we must import the machinery needed for over 2,000 Talukas. And the experts for managing and working the mills will have to be

trained. Mills cannot grow up like mushrooms, as *charkhas* can. The failure of a *charkha* is felt by nobody; the failure of a Taluka mill will mean consternation among the people of the Taluka concerned. In my opinion the proposition advanced by the friend is utterly unsound. I have however suggested that if he has faith in his scheme, he should try it. I must continue to paddle my own canoe, because nothing else attracts me. The *charkha* for me has a charm all its own.

I may be too dense to see its failure. I am not unwilling to be convinced of my error.

The same day that I received the friend's letter, I received another from another friend who says that he has ten years experience of the mill industry. He has tested power spinning and hand weaving and is now engaged in the trade of hand spinning and hand weaving. He gives the palm to the last as a solution for the economic distress. I give this experience for what it is worth. The whole experiment is in too nebulous a state for giving a firm opinion on it. But this much is clear that the spinning wheel is today the only comforter in many a poor home to which no substitute can be taken. Of the spinning wheel, it can be truly said as of no other.

'In this there is no waste of effort, there is no disappointment.

'Even a little of it saves one from great distress'.

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10th July, 1934

### CHARKHA AT 86

Barodada sends the following encouraging letter :

" We Bengalis are addicted to abstract reasoning more than any other people of India. A man who has got ordinary common sense goes directly to his work if he thinks it to be the only way of salvation under the existing circumstances, but a man of abstract logic, if he sees before him any work that he has to perform for the general good, he calls to his aid a host of 'ifs.

and butts' to serve as loop-hole for escaping from any little sacrifice, which may be required of him to successfully carry out the task which he undertakes to perform. We seem to argue, "If such honourable men as A and B who are engaged in the great work of writing which require the exercise of brain rather than hand, were to spend their valuable time in plying the charkha, like the old women of past generations, instead of pen and tongue, they would be rendered quite unfit for leadership. A man of common sense can at once see that if a man holding the high position of leader spin the charkha only half an hour a day, his pen and tongue would be entirely free to preach and write with a great deal more convincing efficacy about the message of the charkha for the masses."

His secretary who encloses the letter says,

"Barodada is fully convinced about the khaddar movement. His faith in the charkha is stronger than ever, and he believes that this will bring about the economic salvation of India which she sorely needs. He says that it is a superstition with us that men should not spin, as if it is the sole monopoly of old women. In order to remove this superstition he has ordered a charkha for himself, and he will try whether he can spin with his own hands. You will be surprised to know how keenly he is watching the present movement even at the ripe age of 86"

### FALSE PRIDE?

I understand that the Khadi Board which is employing a large number of young men for the Khadi work is finding it difficult to get the right kind of men to give their whole time to the work. They want to earn their livelihood by other means. In my opinion this disinclination to accept payment for work is not a healthy sign. We want an army of whole-time workers. In a poor country like India, it is not possible to get such workers without pay. I see not only no shame, but I see credit in accepting pay for national work honestly and well done. We shall have to engage many paid whole-time workers when Swaraj is established. Shall we then feel less pride in

belonging to the swaraj service than Englishmen do in belonging to the Indian Civil Service? How much more justification is there now when no one can be guaranteed absolute permanence, much less pension? Is it not also a grim irony that when lawyers are said to have gone back to practice for want of maintenance, the Khadi Board is hard put to it to find suitable paid workers?

There is another matter also that needs attention. When a person volunteers his service for national work whether with or without pay, he undertakes to come under all the discipline of an ordinary employee. If anything, the discipline is stricter in the case of a volunteer. He may not therefore absent himself without leave. He may not even invite imprisonment except under permission. Civil disobedience has to be civil in more senses than one. There can be no bravado, no impetuosity about it. It has to be an ordered, well thought out, humble offering.

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*10th July, 1924*

## SPINNING RESOLUTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

The spinning resolution of the A. I. C. C. is, in my opinion, the most important of all the resolutions of the A. I. C. C. There is inclination to laugh at it. The members of Congress organisations can demonstrate in a month's time the impropriety of the laugh. Even if the economic value of khaddar be admitted, it will be found on experience that the resolution was necessary to bring about an economic revolution. It is not too much to expect Congress workers to give half an hour's labour to its most popular programme.

Those who voted for the resolution are in honour bound to carry it out. In my opinion the penalty clause had a proper place in the resolution. An organisation has every right to prescribe penalties for a breach by its members of self-



imposed conditions. But now that the penalty clause is out, I hope that even the objectors will comply with the resolution.

Its possibilities are immense. Spinning is obligatory on all representative congressmen. There are or should be in every one of the twenty provinces, provincial, district, taluka and village organisations. They have each at least five hundred such representatives. I understand that some provinces have several thousand representatives. But taking the lowest figure we get over ten thousand members. Two thousand yards of 10 counts means nearly ten tolas. Therefore ten thousand members would be sending 2500 pounds of yarn. That is to say, the representatives would have spun enough yarn to supply five thousand poor men with one vest length of cloth. Apart from every other consideration, is this labour not worth taking for the sake of the poor? Imagine the effect of such work on the poor people! The knowledge of Congressmen working for them must fill them with a new hope.

Take another consideration. Ten thousand representatives cannot be satisfied with just spinning themselves. They must infect with their zeal those they represent. And thus khaddar which is supposed to be on the wane will wax again with redoubled force.

The workers being intelligent men and women will learn the science of spinning and will be therefore in a position to organise their neighbourhoods for hand-spinning.

Moreover, half an hour and ten tolas is the minimum required. As a matter of fact one spins 100 yards in half an hour with the greatest ease. The minimum therefore one can send should be three thousand yards. And half an hour is suggested for the busy worker. Many should be able to spin for one hour. I know some who are now spinning at the rate of two hours per day. The average receipts should therefore be at least double the minimum counted by me i. e. 5000 yards.

I do not suppose any one has yet realised what this hand-spinning means. It is nothing less than making national work

self-supporting. Here are some figures. I have taken low average rates and low average work.

			Rs. a. p.
Ginning one maund ... ..	12 hs.		0—8—0
Carding 13 pounds seedfree cotton out of 1 md. seed cotton ... ..	40 hs.		2—8—0
Spinning 12½ lbs. 10 counts at the rate of 275 yards per hour ... ..	400 hs.		2—6—0
			<hr/>
			Rs. 5—6—0

Thus one man working for 452 hours (say 450) would earn Rs. 5—6—0 (say Rs. 5). ∴ 450 men working one hour would earn Rs. 5. ∴ 450 men working for thirty days at the rate of 1 hour per day would earn Rs. 150. ∴ 450 men giving one hour daily can support with ease 5 volunteers at the rate of Rs. 30 per month.

And five volunteers can easily organise the whole Congress work among 450 men and women. The united labour for a single item of a large number of persons has illimitable possibilities, though the labour of one person for it may mean practically nothing.

An ardent worker may work out many startling figures. I make a present of three propositions to be so worked.

1. If hand-spinning in a poor district is chiefly paid it can remove its poverty.

2. If spinning in a well-to-do district is mainly voluntary, it can support all the volunteers that may be needed.

3. Every village school can defray at least half its expenses if the school children are made to work at all the processes up to spinning for at least 3 hours per school day.

I need not point out that no such results are possible if khaddar does not become as saleable as a postage stamp. It would be criminal if it does not become so in a country which

grows more than enough cotton for its wants, whose population is used to spinning, which has all the accessories necessary for it and which has a very large starving population waiting to be organised for such work.

If this work is to be done efficiently and economically, the Provincial Secretaries and others will have to carry out to the full the instructions they may receive from the Khadi Board. The head-quarters must have a duplicate register containing the names of all the members (serially numbered) who are expected to spin. All yarn must be labelled containing the number of yards, weight and the name and the serial number of the spinner. The Provincial organisations will have to collect sufficient cotton for distribution. Carding will have to be organised. Thus there is no time to be lost, if the returns are to be complete as they should be the very first month.

Lastly those who do not know spinning at all will make no head-way if they commence by spinning only half an hour daily. For the first few days before the fingers respond, the beginner will have to work several hours per day.

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*10th July, 1924*

### ONE PROGRAMME

BY M. K. GANDHI

Friends have asked me to suggest one universal programme in which Rajas, Maharajas, No-changers, Prochangers, Liberals Independents, practising lawyers, Anglo-Indians and all others could join without reserve. I am asked to suggest such a programme with the condition that it must be effective and swift enough for the attainment of Swaraj. The most effective and the swiftest programme, I can suggest is the adoption and organisation of khaddar, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, and removal by the Hindus of untouchability. It is my unalterable belief that if these three things are achieved we can establish Swaraj without the slightest difficulty. I further

believe that if all the parties whole-heartedly work the programme, it can succeed within one year. Success of khaddar will mean boycott of foreign cloth. It is India's right and duty to manufacture all the cloth she needs. She has the means of doing it. And boycott of foreign cloth will automatically purify the English mind and remove the one insuperable obstacle in the way of Englishmen looking at things Indian from the Indian stand-point.

If therefore the country as a whole adopts this threefold programme, I would be prepared to advise suspension of the non-co-operation programme and civil disobedience for a period of one year. I say one year, because an honest working of the programme must bring about a virtual boycott of foreign cloth within that period.

I need hardly say that the co-operation of Swarajists alone in the above programme is not enough to suspend non-co-operation or preparations for civil disobedience. Their assent is already there. They are pledged like all other Congressmen to the full constructive programme. Non-co-operation is necessary so long as there is no change of heart in the Government. And without that change those who keep themselves outside the Congress pale will not actively and openly participate in the programme.

I fear that the time has not yet arrived for such sincere co-operation with the people on the part of the Government or those whose position and prestige depend upon its patronage.

I know too that a very large number of people are not yet converted to the programme of unadulterated khaddar. They disbelieve in the mighty potency of the charkha. They even suspect me of evil designs upon the Indian mills. Few take the trouble of drawing a mental picture of the meaning of the message of the charkha.

I have no doubt that the country will soon come round to the charkha if its votaries are true to their faith. But some of my friends tell me that I am wrong in my diagnosis. They tell me that if I would but drop non-co-operation and civil disobedience

everyone will gather round the charkha and that it is preposterous for me to suspect the Government of a desire to divide Hindus and Mussalmans. I hope I am wrong.

Let me make the position clear regarding our mills. I am not their enemy. I believe they have a place in our economy for some time to come. Boycott of foreign cloth cannot perhaps be brought about speedily without the assistance of mills. But if they are to help, they must become national in spirit. They must not be worked merely for the agents and share-holders but for the nation at large. In our programme, however we must erase the mills, for khaddar has to carve out a position for itself. The message of khaddar has not even been delivered to one out of seven lakhs of villages. The mills have therefore more than six-months of India yet at their disposal. If khaddar is to establish a permanent footing, Congressmen can only use and popularise it to the exclusion of mill cloth. Patriotic mill-owners must see at a glance the utility, the necessity and the reasonableness of my proposition. Indeed they can help khaddar without hurting themselves. If the time comes when the whole of India adopts khaddar, they must rejoice with the nation and they will, even as the Lancashire mill-owners will and must some day, find other uses for their capital and machinery. I have sketched the universal programme for the satisfaction of insistent friends. But I would warn the workers against turning their attention away from the immediate task before them which is to attend to their own and their neighbours' spinning. If universal acceptance does not come now, their spinning and their faith will precipitate it. That it must come some day is a certainty. The precise date can be determined only by those who have already a living faith in it and who have proved it by acting up to it in the face of heaviest odds.

*17th July, 1934*

## A PLEA FOR MILLS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :

“According to you charkha and spinning wheel are the best means of winning Swaraj. It is impossible to dispute your noble intentions or self-sacrifice but it is not understood why you fail to realise that by insisting on the wholesale adoption of Khaddar you will be putting a large number of mill-owners and a considerably larger number of shareholders to terrible loss and distress, for, whereas the former have expended huge sums of money on mills, the latter—of whom there are very many of even below possible competence—have sunk their all in mill shares in the earnest hope of eking out a comfortable living with the decent dividends they would realise, having been emboldened by the prosperity of the mills. Thus, while you hope to bring prosperity to a very large number of lower orders who know no respectability and can in any way make both ends meet, you will doubtless be bringing ruin to an equally large or at least to a very considerable number of high and middle class men.

2. As a great Mahatma imbued with the most disinterested and sympathetic feelings towards mankind at large it behoves you to hold the scales even and to exercise your best intellect in striking a middle course so as on the one hand to encourage charkha and spinning-wheel to a reasonable extent and on the other to help the mill-owners and the huge body of shareholders.

3. By all means boycott foreign cloth but allow the optional use of mill cloth and Khaddar. You will thereby be helping many a high and middle class man.”

This is a pathetic letter. I wish the correspondent's fears were realised. Then he will discover that the impending ruin

of mills and shareholders of mills would be the time of their own and India's salvation. He will discover then that India will be pulsating with a new life and the middle class will be drawing their sustenance not as now from a starving peasantry but from prosperous farmers who would gladly exchange their produce for things they need but cannot themselves manufacture. A little reflection will enable the correspondent to realise that he and the rest of the shareholders as well as directors of mills will have to co-operate with the people before the spinning wheel is so well established as to oust the mills. Let the correspondent derive consolation from the fact that the spinning wheel has to displace nearly sixty crores worth of foreign cloth before it can touch the Indian mill cloth. But for reasons I have stated in these pages every one of us must simply think of Khaddar to the exclusion of even Indian mill-cloth. Our mills need no patronage from me or any one else. They have their own agencies and peculiar methods of advertising their wares. For those who are within the Congress beat to have the option of using mill spun is to kill the Khaddar industry. Khaddar needs all the protection that can be given to it before it can produce an impression upon the market.

So much for the consolation of the correspondent or those who think like him. May I however remind him that if the letter were not written in ignorant fear of consequences to the mills and the middle class, it would be considered a heartless performance? What does the correspondent mean when he refers to "lower orders who know no respectability and can in anyway make both ends meet?" Is he sure that 'lower orders know no respectability?' Have they no feelings, are they not injured by an angry word? In what sense are they lower except in their poverty for which we the middle class are responsible? And may I inform the correspondent that the "lower orders" not only do not "make the two ends meet" but the majority of them are living in a state of semi-starvation? If the middle class people voluntarily suffer losses for the sake of the 'lower classes it would be but tardy reparation for their participation

in their exploitation. It is this arrogation of superiority and consequent callousness to the sufferings of the so-called lower classes that keeps us from Swaraj and that retards the progress of the life-giving charkha. I invite the correspondent to think in terms of the masses and by taking to the charkha identify himself with his less fortunate countrymen.

Lastly let the correspondent remember that if I may be advised on the ground of my broad humanity to be tender to our mills at the expense of the 'lower classes,' I must also be urged as I have been by other friends to be tender to foreign mills for the same reasons. But if it is true, as it is true, that foreign mills have destroyed the prosperity of the masses, the consideration of humanity demands that the masses should be taught to revert to the charkha even though foreign mill-owners may suffer. Even so must indigenous mills suffer if need be for the sake of those on whose poverty their fortunes are built. If an enterprising baker puts up cheap bakeries in our villages so as to replace household kitchens, the whole nation, I hope, will rise against such an enterprise. The reason for the opposition would be the same as the reason for my opposition to the mills *when they come in conflict with the interest of the masses.*

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24th July, 1934

### CLOTH OR STEEL

Acharya Ray has issued a pathetic appeal to the nation. He says in effect that if it is good to pay one crore and a half annually for protecting steel, surely it is infinitely better to protect Khadi cloth by paying a much larger bounty.

Dr. Ray says :

But of the two industries, cloth and steel, which is of greater importance? Our cloth industry died on account of unfair foreign competition. If protection is to be given which industry has the strongest claim for receiving State protection? Our people are



in dire want of the primary necessities of life, food and clothes. Could not our hand-spinning industry be protected by duties from competition with imported cotton goods? But the Government would not do it. India can not do it until she has *Swaraj*. What the Government would not do the popular will can accomplish. It is for us to say that we refuse to wear imported cotton goods. It is for us to say that we shall use only hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi and thereby stop a drain of sixty crores of rupees annually. It is for us to protect our cloth industry against foreign competition.

From my experience I can say that hand-spinning has come to stay—if our countrymen will out of their patriotism bear with coarse product and costlier stuff for only a few years. I would ask you who are unconsciously paying one and a half crores to Tata steel, to consciously pay something for revival of an industry in comparison with which even Tata's steel industry is a pigmy. Our patriotism must carry us through to success during the earlier days of our struggle—till only the infant industry is established on a sure footing.

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TO P. B.

I must apologise for having delayed my reply to your questions. Here it is:

(1) I do advocate a prohibitive import duty on foreign cloth even though it may only benefit home mills and not Khaddar. I am impatient to bring about a total boycott of foreign cloth. I do not dread the home mill competition with khaddar, for I know that our mills are to-day not in a position to supply India's requirements. But supposing they do, I should not hesitate for the sake of protecting the masses, to protect khaddar against our mills as I would now protect them against foreign competition. My study of the figures goes to show that boycott of foreign cloth will equally benefit both our mills and hand-spun khaddar.

(2) Protection of Khaddar I do not regard as compulsion just as I would not regard prohibition of drink as compulsion. It

is no part of the duty of the State to countenance for the sake of a minority what public opinion regards as detrimental to the moral or the material well-being of the people as a whole.

(3) I do not dread foreign capital or foreigners coming to India if they do not as now receive favoured treatment in a variety of ways. We are well able to hold our own in fair and equal competition.

(4) I am personally opposed to great trusts and concentration of industries by means of elaborate machinery. But at the present moment I am concerned with destroying the huge system of exploitation which is ruining India. If India takes to Khaddar and all it means, I do not lose the hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery system as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and for life-saving purposes.

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*21st August, 1924*

## WASTE OF ENERGY?

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend has invited my attention to an article in the *Welfare* of May last which is an examination by Mr. M. N. Roy of Acharya Ray's address at the opening of the khaddar exhibition at Cocanada. The copy has been lying among my papers for fully two months. I am sorry that I have not been able to read the article before now. Having read it I feel that Mr. Roy's refutation of Dr. Ray's contentions has been often refuted in these pages. But as readers have short memories, it is perhaps as well for me to restate the arguments in a connected form. Dr. Ray's critic considers that all the effort made on behalf of the charkha is a waste of energy.' The central point in Dr. Ray's argument is that the charkha has a message specially for the peasant in that it enables him to utilise his idle hours. The critic contends that the peasant has not any idle hours to utilise. What leisure he has he needs. If he is

idle for four months, it is because he has over-worked himself for eight months, and that if he is made to work the four months at the wheel, his efficiency for eight months' work will deteriorate from year to year. In other words according to the critic the nation has no leisure for the charkha.

It appears to me that the critic has little if any experience of the peasantry of India. Nor has he been able to picture to himself the way the charkha would work, and indeed is working to-day. The peasantry does not need to slave at the charkha. It affords a pleasant variety and recreation after hard toil. As a permanent institution, it is presented to the women of India. They will spin during odd moments. If the majority of the toilers were to give on an average half an hour per day they would spin enough yarn for themselves and to spare for the rest. Such worker would add to his or her income at least Rs. 1-11-0 per year—not a bad addition to the income of a starving person. It is admitted that there are enough hand-looms and weavers to-day in India to weave all the cloth we may require. The only question is therefore that of hand-spinning. If the peasantry would take to it, the problem could be solved without any great outlay of capital, of India becoming self-supporting for her cloth. This would mean at least sixty million rupees circulating among the millions of spinners and thousands of carders and weavers of India working in their own cottages and to that extent raising the earning capacity of the peasantry.

It is the experience all the world over that peasants need a subsidiary occupation to supplement their earnings or occupy their leisure hours. It must not be forgotten that not very long ago India's women spun during spare hours all the yarn it required. Revival of spinning has demonstrated the truth of the statement in a most striking manner. It is an error to suppose that the movement has failed. The workers have indeed partly failed. But wherever they have done their work well, it has continued. It is true that it has not yet acquired stability. This is because of incomplete organisation and also because

the spinners are not yet sure or being steadily employed. I invite Mr. Roy to study the conditions in the Punjab, Karnatak, Andhra, parts of Tamil Nadu and he will find out for himself what possibilities spinning has.

India is a land of famines. Is it better that men and women should break stones, or card and spin? Through chronic famine conditions, the people of Orissa have been reduced to beggary. It is the most difficult thing now even to make them work. They are slowly dying out. Revival of spinning is their only hope.

Mr. Roy lays stress upon improved agriculture. This is necessary. But spinning is not to replace the contemplated improvement. On the contrary it will herald it. This improvement has tremendous difficulties in its way. We have to surmount the unwillingness of the Government, the want of capital and the obstinate refusal of the peasant to take to new methods. What is claimed for spinning is that :

(1) it supplies the readiest occupation to those who have leisure and are in want of a few coppers :

(2) it is known to the thousands ;

(3) it is easily learnt ;

(4) it requires practically no outlay of capital ;

(5) the wheel can be easily and cheaply made. Most of us do not yet know that spinning can be done even with a piece of tile and a splinter ;

(6) the people have no repugnance to it ;

(7) it affords immediate relief in times of famine and scarcity ;

(8) it alone can stop the drain of wealth which goes outside India in the purchase of foreign cloth ;

(9) it automatically distributes the millions thus saved among the deserving poor ;

(10) even the smallest success means so much immediate gain to the people ;

(11) it is the most potent instrument of securing co-operation among the people.

The difficulties in the way are want of faith among the middle classes which alone can supply the required number of workers. The greater difficulty still is the disinclination of the people to take to khaddar in the place of the fine-looking mill-made cloth. The dearness of khaddar during the transition stage is an additional difficulty. If the people respond to the spinning resolution in sufficient numbers, khaddar can be made to compete with mill-made cloth. There is no doubt that the movement does require for its success a little sacrifice on the part of the people. Even this direct sacrifice will not be necessary if we had our own Government mindful of the wants of the peasants and determined to protect them against foreign competition. Voluntary sacrifice for a time by the middle class can do what the Government would do if it was national.

There is no question of waste of energy. Have the thousands of our sisters, to whom Dr. Ray was previously giving doles of charity and is now giving honourable employment and making them partly or wholly self-supporting, wasted their energy? They have no other occupation save that of begging or starving. Is it waste of energy for young men to be going to the villages, studying their wants, feeling for them and helping them onward? Is it waste of energy for thousands of well-to-do young men and woman to think of the poor half-fed millions and for their sakes to set apart half an hour religiously to spinning on their behalf? If one man or woman spins for a few pice. when he or she has no other occupation, it is so much gain; if one man or woman spins as a sacrifice, it is also so much gain. If there is one activity in which it is all gain and no loss, it is hand-spinning.

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*21st August, 1924*

## DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY

By M. K. GANDHI

Here is what a worker in the south writes about the Panchamas.

"I am just returning from a Panchama gathering. It was all very nice and encouraging. But as we returned from the Panchama quarter, we passed through the main village. There was an ominous-looking party of villagers, all ryots, non-Brahman peasants, gathered under the village banyan tree. They stood up when we stopped to greet them. A conversation ensued which dispelled my fond visions. It was a khaddar producing village. It was obvious khaddar work was going to stop, for they don't like this untouchability business. We could not get a bullock cart to negotiate the country road. We somehow reached our car in the main road late in the night and after a few tyre-punctures and halts reached home at midnight, sad and not very sleepy. This is nothing. Only in the south this untouchability business is too big and all of us with all our resources can be at it for years. We run it now as a subordinate part of Congress work. It won't do!"

Of course it won't do. Untouchability is a terrible reality. If they had a tongue, we should not be able to sleep for the noise the untouchables would make about the treatment meted out to them in the name of religion.

We have only played at it. We have neither sacrificed ease nor time, much less money at all commensurate with the work required, whereas we Hindus will have to pour our blood like water in order to achieve the end. Let us reformers at once admit that we are on this question in a hopeless minority. I verily believe that the adoption of the reform by the Congress has given it a tremendous momentum. But it has only touched

the fringe of the problem. We have not seriously tackled it. We wanted excitement of a sort. The work of untouchability can bring no such excitement. It requires silent, self-effacing work. On the one hand we have to break down the wall of prejudice, not by violence but by patient effort that only love can evoke. The moment we lose temper with the orthodox, we lose ground and make our own and the panchamas' position worse than before. We have to reason with them, we must put up with their taunts, their insults, yes, even their kicks without retaliation. We will then have produced an atmosphere that will enable truth to reveal itself to the orthodox people.

We must know our own mind. We must not have many minds on this question. Let us understand that this is not a question of inter-dining nor of inter-marrying. Nor is it a question of abolition of *varna-dharma* mistranslated caste. It is a question purely and simply of removing untouchability, of abolishing the unwarranted fifth division. We have a school of reform that aims at a total abolition of the *varna-dharma*. This is not the place to examine the merits of the reform. The movement against untouchability restricts itself to removing the sinful superstition that mere touch of a person, because he is born in a particular group, is a pollution to be atoned for. The more the movement progresses in extent and intensity, the more urgent it becomes to understand and scrupulously to abide by its limitations. Thus whilst we challenge orthodoxy, we must assure it at the same time that we mean no more than we say. It must be enabled to understand the full scope of the movement. Letters I receive weekly show that the minimum has not always been kept steadily in view. The orthodox people have become naturally alarmed. It makes the reformer's task far more difficult than it need be.

On the other hand we must be equally patient with the Panchama brother. He does not always appreciate our effort. He often distrusts us. I know untouchable parents who resent their children being taught the degradation and unhealthiness of eating the remains of cooked food from the dishes of the

touchables. Some resent even cleanliness itself. They cling to their habits with almost as much tenacity as the orthodox to their belief in pollution.

A reformer of the average type, therefore, when he realises the immensity of the work before him, is likely to despair, if not actually to begin to think that the untouchables deserve the treatment they receive, as if they are to blame for the circumstances in which they find themselves.

It is perhaps now clear why I say that we might have to pour out our blood like water before the curse is removed and Hinduism becomes purified.

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*28th August, 1924*

## TWO SIDES

BY M. K. GANDHI

The spinning resolution is proving a remarkable study in the mentality of Congressmen. It required a resolution of the A. I. C. C. to make Congressmen understand that for hand-spinning to be universal, it was the duty of at least Congress representatives not only to learn but to practice spinning. They have now begun to see the force of it. Till now in spite of an earlier resolution of the A. I. C. C. that all such Congressmen should at least learn the art, the majority had not even touched the wheel.

No wonder that spinning 'has not made enough progress for bringing about an effective boycott of foreign cloth.' Now however men who had thought they would never be able to spin have not only begun to do so but have also begun to like it. Here is an extract from a letter :

"I was late in sitting to work. Some more days were taken up in collecting material. Then for a few days more I kept quarrelling with my tools, thus showing the kind of workman that I am. When the wheel became amenable to reason, the slivers revolted. The silly things refused to



yield thread but seemed to have no objection to let out the whole of themselves at a bound. It appeared to me that it was much easier to spin fine speculative thread from a chair of philosophy than to turn out real live yarn from a spinning wheel. If I had realised that the mischievous Mahatma had this trouble in store for us, I would have thought a hundred times before non-co-operating with my comfortable chair at the college at his call in 1921. I had thought then that as a leader I would have the privilege of descanting upon spinning from a hundred platforms and not have to practise it. I have been rudely disillusioned. Well, I accept the inevitable as retreat now is out of the question. I send you the result of my labours, poor as it is. The conditions laid down have not in a single point been fulfilled. But I can assure you my heart has not failed and I yet hope to show very creditable results."

I can multiply such instances of late though zealous response.

But the reader should know the other side also. Here is a free translation of the only letter of its kind received from the president of a subordinate Congress Committee. He says:—

"I regard as improper this resolution of the A. I. C. C. Today it is the spinning wheel or the resignation. To-morrow it may be 'cook your own meal or resign' or it may be 'shave your heads clean or resign.' I distrust the philosophy of the charkha. I distrust its advantages. In short I distrust it just as much as Mahatma Gandhi trusts it. It is his hobby. I am not going to submit to the resolution nor am I going to resign. Let the committee expel me."

To belong to an institution is no joke. To be its president is a serious thing. This gentleman has been probably giving his vote in favour of the wheel every time votes have been taken. But now that it has reached the testing stage, he proclaims his disbelief from the housetop. Better late than never. I therefore congratulate him on the courage of his convictions but I am afraid I cannot put up his disobedience as an exam-

ple worthy of imitation. No organisation can be run with success if its members, especially its officers, refuse to carry out its policy and hold on to it in spite of opposition to it. For winning Swaraj one requires iron discipline. Let this friend and those who think with him realise that we are engaged in the very difficult and delicate task of wresting authority from an organisation whose members are able, industrious, intelligent, brave and above all trained in habits of exact discipline. Assuming that we desire a bloodless victory, I respectfully suggest to the friend that even though the charkha may be useless for the purpose intended, its value is inestimable as a measure of discipline. I suggest to him that as a measure of discipline it would not be a worthless idea, even that of requiring every one to cook for himself, or to shave himself clean. Such tests, ridiculous though they may otherwise appear to be, have a value all their own for they give the measure of obedience evoked. All protest before the passing of such measures is legitimate and sometimes obligatory. After the passing there can be no room for reasoning. Willing and complete obedience or resignation is an absolute duty on the part of members.

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## WHEELLESS SPINNING

BY MAHADEV DESAI

Ever since the passing of the A. I. C. C. resolution about spinning, workers have been exercising themselves as to whether there is no simpler and easily portable contrivance for spinning. For many of them have to be on the move a considerable part of their time, and if they are seriously to put into effect the decision to devote all their spare time to the *charkha*, they would think themselves blessed if they could hit upon a contrivance which would yield them yarn and which they could carry about without the least inconvenience where-ever they went. Such a contrivance there is and it is no other than the

spindle without the wheel. The wheel was evidently invented to obtain greater speed. Nomad shepherds still go about with the spindle spinning their wool even whilst they are walking, and orthodox Brahmans and Parsi priests still insist on having their sacred thread, *upavitani* and *kasti*, made out of the spindle spun yarn. The orthodox *takli* spindle consists of a two-piece-sized disk of wood or slate to the centre of which is fixed a straight polished splinter of about 9 inches, with a little notch at the top to hold the thread from slipping off. The splinter serves as the pin, and the disk along with the splinter makes of it a revolving bobbin. Present-day enthusiasts have improved upon this by substituting a copper or iron disk instead of the wood or slate one, and a straight iron wire instead of the splinter. This one costs a few coppers, the orthodox one costs nothing at all. You hold the liver in the left hand, fix on the end of the initial thread to it, keep it about a foot from the notched end, and go on spinning the spindle by occasional gentle jerks with your right hand finger and thumb. The idea is that it should continually revolve. Take hold of the thread in the middle and go on pulling it with the right index finger and the thumb, giving it a gentle twist all the while. The process is so eminently simple that any villager will demonstrate it and teach it within half an hour, or an hour at the most. After about a couple of days' practice you will find a strong, beautifully even thread running out of the sliver, even as a jet of milk from the udder of a grateful cow.

Now the uses of this are great. The process is slow but it has the joys and advantages of all slow and steady processes. Once you have resolved to give all your spare time to spinning, you can no more afford to be without this spindle than you can without walking, even though you have a cycle or a carriage. For even as you cannot move about in your house on a cycle or carriage, and must walk, you may not carry about your charkha in railway trains or bullock-carts, but you have often to waste your time in them, unless you have armed yourself with this

simple tool. In railway trains and on the platform there is no surer instrument of propaganda. You may go on spinning on the spindle and talking away to your friends and fellow-passengers. If you are tired of sitting in one posture, you may stand up and ply the *takli*. In fact you can work it better standing. If you feel like stretching your legs after a day's sedentary toil, you can walk about to the accompaniment of the willing spindle. No doubt it spins slowly, not yielding more yarn than 70 or 75 yards an hour, but it is as sure and steady as the tortoise in the story. It is mute and gives you no music like the charkha; but neither is it noisy like an unwilling charkha. Ever ready and ever willing, unlike the charkha so often 'uncertain, coy and hard to please,' it is an eloquent exemplar of the sage maxim, 'constant dropping wears away stones.' The little that you get out of it is a precious addition to your stock of yarn, wrested out of the time that might otherwise have escaped you. I know friends who have dhotis made out of yarn spun on the *takli* all during odd leisure moments snatched out of laborious toil, and though I would not ask anyone to take my suggestion literally, I think the busiest worker amongst us may be sure of rendering his quota of yarn with the *takli* and without any great effort. I may assure him that I gave some of my spare moments to the *takli* last month and have now with me 4000 yards of beautifully even and well-twisted yarn of about 16 counts. Spinning on the *takli* is a most pleasant and useful pastime. Good children will cling to it lovingly after they have learnt it, while naughty ones who cannot possibly reconcile themselves to go through the trying process of getting the wheel ready and keeping it in proper trim, will clutch at this simple device, which helps them to dispense with the wheel string, a straight spindle, the spindle-plugs and the oilcan. They need have nothing more than good slivers. For schoolmasters who are hard put to it to find room in their schools for charkhas, there is no better substitute, while even for the invalid and the ailing this would be a 'ministering angel,' saving them from the inconvenient necessity of putting themselves on the list of the exempted.

*The following notes by Mahatma Gandhi appeared in 'Young India.'*

*28th August, 1924*

### A BADGE OF SUBSERVIENCE

Every Indian publicist knows that when a duty was placed on cotton goods imported, an excise cotton duty was placed on Indian production solely in the interest of Lancashire and it still remains in spite of protests and in spite even of promises that it would be reconsidered. This duty is a continuing reminder to us of the subordination of India's interest to England's. Some friends who only know my strong, indeed passionate, preference for handspun to the exclusion of millspun cannot understand my advocacy of preference for Indian millspun. A little reflection must however show the consistency between the two policies. Foreign cloth must be totally banished from the Indian market, if India is to become an economically free nation if her peasantry is to be freed from chronic pauperism, if that peasantry is to find honourable employment during times of famine and such other visitations. Protection of her staple industry is her birth-right. I would therefore protect the Indian mills against foreign competition even though for the time being it may result in mulcting the poor people. Such mulcting can take place only if the mill owners be so unpatriotic as to raise prices owing to the monopoly they may secure. I have therefore no hesitation in advocating the repeal of cotton excise duties and imposition of a prohibitive import duty.

Similarly and consistently would I protect hand-spun khaddar against the home mills. And I know that if only foreign competition is avoided khaddar will be protected without difficulty. Foreign cloth will be banished when public opinion becomes effectively powerful. The same power will insure the protection of khaddar against mills. But my strong belief is that khaddar will come to its own without any unseemly war with the mills. But, whilst khaddar has only a limited number

of votaries, they the votaries must necessarily preach khaddar in preference to and to the exclusion of yarn and cloth manufactured even in our mills. To give the option is to kill khaddar.

### MILL KHADI

But says the impatient patriot, 'Surely you can have no corner for the mills in your heart when the mill-owners do not hesitate even to palm off fraudulent imitations of khadi on the gullible public.' I know this imitation khadi. I have purposely kept the precious samples in front of me in order to warn me of my duty not to be angry against the mill-owners in question in spite of their unpatriotic conduct. I know that they could have conducted their trade without entering into competition with khadi. They could at least have refrained for miscalling their coarse cloth 'khadi' when they well knew that 'khadi' was a word used to signify handspun cotton cloth. But two wrongs cannot make one right. My Satyagrahi spirit tells me that I may not retaliate. I may not imitate their unpatriotic conduct. I know that if lovers of khadi remain true to their faith, hand-spun khadi will thrive against all odds. Non-co-operators must, therefore, irrespective of what some mills are wittingly or unwittingly doing to injure khadi, continue to advocate not only the repeal of cotton excise duty but advocate also full protection of that great industry.

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*11th September, 1924*

### FOR FALLEN HUMANITY

By M. K. GANDHI

It was at Barisal that I had the privilege of meeting our fallen sisters, victims of our lust, now nearly three years ago. Some of them said, "We earn from two to three rupees per day. You must give us some occupation that would give us as much." For a moment I sank within me but immediately

came to myself and said, "No, my dear sisters, I cannot suggest anything that would give you two or three rupees per day but I must ask you to give up your calling even though you have to starve. There is the spinning wheel however. If you take it, it will be your salvation."

The fallen sisters are only a small part of the fallen humanity of India. The skin and bone of Orissa are also in a sense part of that humanity. They are the victims of our ignorance as the first are of our lust. In their case it is not our animal lust but the lust for wealth that reduces them to skin and bone. They bleed so that we may become rich.

But now, thank God, we the educated middle class are hungering to identify ourselves with our fallen sisters and our starving brothers. We desire Swaraj so that they may live. We cannot all go to the villages and help the villagers. The fallen sister is a perpetual reminder to us to become pure. How then can we think of and feel for them from day to day? What may we all do for them every day? We are so weak that we want to do as little as possible. What is that little? I can think of nothing else but the spinning wheel. The work must be easy, capable of being done by all the learned and the ignorant, the good and the bad, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, the strong and the weak, no matter to what religion they belong. The work to be effective must be the same for all. The spinning wheel satisfies all these conditions. Therefore he or she who spins for half an hour every day serves the masses in the most efficient manner possible. And he renders whole-hearted conscious service to the fallen humanity of India and thus brings Swaraj nearer for that service.

The spinning wheel for us is the foundation for all public corporate life. It is impossible to build any permanent public life without it. It is the one visible link that indissolubly binds us to the lowest in the land and thus gives them a hope. We may or must add many things to it but let us first make sure of it even as a wise mason makes sure of his foundation before he begins to build the superstructure and the bigger

the structure the deeper and stronger the foundation. For the result to be obtained therefore spinning should become universal in India.

But spinning will be not only the connecting link between the masses and the classes, it will be the link between the different political parties. It will become common to all the parties. They may disagree on all other things if they like, but they can agree on this at the least.

I ask therefore every one who loves the country, loves the poorest and the fallen, to give half an hour's labour daily to spinning even and well twisted yarn for their sake, and in the name of God. As this must be a gift to the nation, it must be delivered to the All India Khadi Board with religious regularity.

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*31st October, 1924*

## TWO SCENES

BY M. K. GANDHI

During my visit to Puri in 1921 I saw many things that I shall not easily forget. But among them all there were two that I shall never forget. One of them haunts me day and night.

In those days Puri had a philanthropic Superintendent of Police. He managed an orphanage. He showed it to me. It had many happy, well-looking, bright children who were engaged in all kinds of industries—mat weaving, basket-making, spinning, weaving etc. The Superintendent told me they were all children of famine stricken parents, some of whom were picked up as mere skin and bone.

He then took me to an open space in the very shadow of the hoary temple where were arranged in rows the famine stricken people who were living within twelve miles of Puri. Some of these no doubt owed their lives to the charity of the Gujaratis and the loving service of Amritlal Thakkar who doled out to them the rice he bought with the monies supplied by the



Gujaratis. The life was ebbing away in them. They were living pictures of despair. You could count every rib. You could see every artery. There was no muscle, no flesh. Parched, crumpled skin and bone was all you could see. There was no lustre in their eyes. They seemed to want to die. They had no interest anything save the handful of rice they got. They would not work for money. For love, perhaps! It almost seemed as if they would condescend to eat and live if you would give them the handful of rice. It is the greatest tragedy I know of—these men and women, our brothers and sisters, dying a slow torturing death. Theirs is an eternal compulsory fast. And as they break it occasionally with rice they seem to mock us for the life we live.

‘Why could they not be kept like the orphans?’ I asked the Superintendent. ‘They will not work and will not stay there,’ was the reply. The Superintendent might also have added that he could not accommodate thousands of starving men and women, even if they were ready to work, in an asylum.

There is on the face of the earth no other country that has the problem that India has of chronic starvation and slow death—a process of dehumanisation. The solution must therefore be original. In trying to find it we must discover the causes of the tremendous tragedy. These people are starving because there is chronic famine in Orissa due to floods or want of rains. They have no other occupation to fall back upon. They are therefore constantly idle. This idleness has persisted for so long that it has become a habit with them. Starvation and idleness are the normal condition of life for thousands of people in Orissa. But what is true of Orissa is to a less extent true of many other parts of India.

We may find remedies to prevent floods. That will take years. We may induce people to adopt better methods of cultivation. That must take still more years. And when we have stopped inundations and have introduced among millions up to date cultivation, there will still be plenty of time left with the peasants if they will only work. But these improvements

will take generations. How are the starving millions to keep the wolf from the door meanwhile? The answer is through the spinning wheel. But how are the people who will not work at all be made to take up even the spinning wheel? The answer is by us the workers, the educated and the well-to-do people taking up spinning. An ocular and sincere demonstration by thousands who need not spin for themselves cannot fail to move these starving men and women to do likewise. Moreover it will be only when *we* take up spinning that we shall be able to get the requisite number of skilled spinners who can give the necessary preliminary tuition, choose the right kind of wheel, do the repairs etc. Lastly voluntary spinning by thousands cannot but cheapen khaddar and enable us to produce finer counts. If therefore we will identify ourselves with our famishing countrymen, we will not only not cavil at the spinning franchise but would welcome it as the surest way to the solution of the problem of the ever deepening and distressful poverty of the masses.

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*4th December, 1924*

## HAND-SPINNING AT ADYAR

BY M. K. GANDHI

The reader will be glad to read the following letter received by Dr. Besant from Mme. de Manziarly and her comments thereon which I reproduce from the current number of the *Theosophist*:

“ I read in *New India* about your talk with Mr. Gandhi concerning spinning and would like you to know what is going on in that respect in Adyar. In May (when you were absent in London) I learned to spin. I was the first to do it on the compound, because I was so intensely interested in village welfare, home industries and dreaming of active help to the villages round Adyar through spinning weaving, dyeing with vegetable dyes, embroidery and other

rural industries. Later, others learned to spin, and now in our new vocational shed belonging to Miss Barrie's Montessori school, Mrs. Peramma gives lessons to eleven village women, besides several ladies and children of the compound. The charkhas are made by the carpenter belonging to the vocational shed. I am now learning to weave, and we have already two looms in the shed, and soon I will start the dyeing. It may be of use to you to know and to be able to tell about our endeavour.

“There must be not so many European women spinning in India, and it is perhaps interesting that a Theosophist does it, and not out of a political conviction, but only from the wish to help—which coincides with politics. We even could send yarn through you to Mr. Gandhi for the Congress, if you wished us to do so instead of weaving it into khaddar ourselves. Now at least a dozen people are spinning regularly.

“To the spinning and weaving we will add other things—beauty, which will enrich soul and spirit and give creative joy, and in this way not only the economic life of this poor people will be improved, but their spiritual life too—and by it our synthetic Theosophical programme fulfilled. We dream too—and being neither old nor young, I combine the two : *see visions and dream* of a wonderful work before us.”

“It is interesting—and curious to those who live on the surface—that this has been going on in my absence, and that I, knowing nothing of it, just on my return to India, said to Mr. Gandhi in Bombay, I was willing to spin half an hour a day, if it would help unity. Mme. de Manziarly is a very charming woman, and ‘has a way wid her,’ as the Irish say. So she suggested to the women who began to spin saleable yarn, that they should spin from a charkha that would be their own; they preferred the annas, but she so praised the usefulness of having a charkha with which they could go on spinning annas perennially, that they exchanged

yarn for charkhas and then carried them home for their own use. Now yarn is made and woven into cloth in the Craft Shed, and out of the cloth little jackets of the South Indian fashion are made for the children and these are becoming the uniform of the school. Mme. de Manziarly brought various kinds of charkhas, and she and the carpenter between them made one which is very simple and effective. They spin from the seeds directly, without any intermediate processes. Now she has gone off to learn vegetable dyeing which is still done in Southern India, and which she wishes to add to our villages here. This is a well-considered plan, and the idea may spread. Parts of it might be taken up in any village, and the whole in the larger villages. If a Panchayat were added to it, the village would be on the right road.'

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*18th December 1924*

## ELEVEN DAYS IN MADRAS

BY DEVADAS GANDHI

In a declaration made in the press some time ago Dr. Annie Besant said she would "do her bit" in the matter of setting a personal example in hand-spinning, if that was the thing that stood between her and the Congress. Having made this emphatic declaration, any delay on her part was out of the question. It was on the 29th of August that Dr. Besant and my father were holding an important consultation on the political situation in the country. As I happened to be within ear-shot of them, I was summoned in the middle of their consultation with my little spinning implement. I gave just a minute's demonstration of the working of the *takli* or the twirli-gig as she called it to Dr. Besant. Having thus had one privilege I was easily and naturally booked for the other i. e. giving actual lessons to her in spinning. I was asked to keep myself in readiness to go to any place where I might be called upon to go for

the purpose. The expected invitation came from Adyar on the first of December. It seemed to me I was placed in the very awkward position of the man who carried coal to Newcastle. I could almost hear my friends laughing at the very thought of my going on a mission of teaching spinning in a place which was the seat of that great art. But a promise was a promise, and this fact gave me heart in my venturesome step.

I went equipped for more work in Adyar than merely helping Dr. Besant to acquire the art of spinning. I had in my armoury besides a few *taklis*, a *charkha* of an easily portable size, specially made, and other accessories essential to spinning. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, himself a master of both the science and the art of spinning, joined me on the very first day to give me a proper start. Dr. Besant saw us immediately on our arrival. She discussed with Mr. Rajagopalachari a few details about her accommodation at Belgaum during the Congress week and asked him where she could obtain a copy of the Congress constitution and the creed which she wished to sign before going to Belgaum, her disagreement with the Congress being not on the question of the creed but on the question of non-co-operation.

Now, from the time I left Ahmedabad, the thought uppermost in my mind was how best to obtain Dr. Besant's consent to give a trial to the *charkha* before taking up the twirli-gig. I could not get over the idea that the twirli-gig was more a symbol of the *charkha* than a substitute for it and completely lacked the captivating music of the latter. It was a mute instrument which could not by itself introduce one to the charm of the wheel and was not in any way to be compared with it. Moreover it had been borne in upon my mind that a knowledge of the rather difficult process of spinning on the *takli* was invariably better and more easily acquired after one had practised sufficiently on the spinning wheel. Though I may have been wrong in this latter impression, for the reasons I have mentioned I had determined to do all I could to prevent the calamity of the reserved lady beginning with the *takli*. I found instantly

that, if I had harboured any apprehension on this score, I had made a mistake. Mr. Rajagopalachari agreeing with me in my request, Dr. Besant, to our agreeable surprise, readily consented to take up the *charkha* first. I felt my task half accomplished.

The first lesson was to be on the morning of the next day.

The day of our arrival was spent in meeting friends and making new ones. By a happy coincidence, while we were talking with Dr. Besant in the magnificent hall of the Adyar library, Mrs. Margaret Cousins entered with a number of hand-woven *sarees* under her arm. The *sarees* were discussed immediately. We had other valuable information also and this incident in fact paved the way for our further work. It was settled that we should meet Dr. Besant and Mrs. Cousins in the evening when we could also discuss several matters connected with spinning and weaving'. There was quite a conference at the Cousins, in which numerous friends joined. It was decided there that a demonstration of the spinning wheel be held next morning.

Dr. Besant made a very good beginning. Her success was unusual. She spun yarn, not ropes as most beginners do. Dr. Besant strove with utmost concentration. The hands moved steadily. When the thread broke she wanted me each time to explain to her the reason. The reasons in every case are usually patent and I supplied them readily. She tried hard to avoid repeating a mistake and generally succeeded. After about 20 minutes I asked her if she did not feel tired. 'No' was the decisive reply. She had got a painful knee and the sitting posture had constantly to be changed and adjusted on this account. But this mattered very little to her. She was determined to master the art. When the first 'lesson' was over I found I had learnt more of concentration, steadiness, endurance, and patience from the example I had just had the privilege of witnessing than I had taught of spinning. The second lesson was to be given the following morning at 7 A. M.

After the lesson came the demonstration. The European

ladies residing in Adyar, some of them guests and students, others in charge of important branches of educational work under Dr Besant, for whom it was arranged, were deeply interested in it. A number of them decided on the spot to avail themselves of the earliest chance of learning spinning. When the party broke up, some of us went to a little school opened two years ago in the Theosophical compound for the benefit of the children of the neighbouring villages. For the past two months Madame de Manziarly had introduced hand-spinning in the school. We were shown round by Miss M. W. Barrie and Madame de Manziarly. Everything was perfectly neat and tidy. The children, some no bigger than babies, far from being noisy, were in their own way learning their alphabet and arithmetic from little wooden pieces of pretty colours and shapes. In such an institution the spinning wheel had a natural place. Some of the children were spinning for all they were worth at wheels which admit of considerable improvement.

To know Mrs. Cousins, Miss Barrie and Madame de Manziarly was to get into touch with everything in Adyar that concerned my mission. They were extremely interested to gather all possible knowledge of spinning and the processes incidental to it. Madame de Manziarly took no time to master all the little secrets of spinning and when she tried the *Takli* it seemed to come naturally to her. She is literally mad after hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar and when Mr. Rajagopalachari asked her if she thought khaddar was beautiful enough she said 'I would not be wearing khaddar if I did not think it immensely beautiful'.

On the third day, Dr. Besant had her second 'lesson.' She gave me a whole hour. I was passing anxious moments while I noticed Dr. Besant encounter the real difficulties of the beginner—difficulties which appear insurmountable and may ultimately drive one to despair. But I drew comfort from Dr. Besant's steadfastness. I knew further that if there were moments of distress always in store for the beginner, there were also moments of exhilaration and that spinning became a perfect recreation

both mental and physical, once the initial obstacles were overcome. The perseverance of the second day bore fruit on the third. The difficulties were seen transforming themselves into delights. The thread was more even and was drawn with less effort. The experiences of the days that followed were distinctly encouraging and Mr. Rajagopalachari was easily able to give Dr. Besant a good certificate. Dr. Besant's eyes gave a little trouble and the whole formula of instruction had to be revised. She began to be guided by sounds and the plan worked well. At a later stage she told me she felt perfectly at home with the wheel.

The other learners kept me engaged the rest of the day. Dr. Besant's private secretary, Miss Willson, was quick to learn spinning. She simply marvelled at the simple yet fascinating process and remarked she liked to get into the cotton *punis* and see what exactly was happening to enable the beautiful and even thread to come out. Miss Barrie learnt good spinning in half an hour. The mystery of her startling success lay in the fact that she had been watching the young children day after day. Lady Emily Lutyens tried the experiment of beginning with the *tukli*.

In spite of my pre-occupation at Adyar I found time to go out into the town and attend to other duties. One of the foremost duties was to seek an opportunity of coming into touch with the lady who had been reported by A. I. K. B. to have performed a record of fine spinning which took us back to the days of Dacca muslin. I had seen her yarn of nearly 400 counts. Now I sought an opportunity of seeing her wheel and witnessing with my own eyes its working. I had no difficulty in getting my cherished desire fulfilled. Early during my stay in Madras I had the privilege of making the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Ramarao. Mr. Ramrao who is studying Law in Madras belongs to a wealthy family in Andhradesh. To the readers of *Young India* his wife is better known as Srimathi Kamalamma Garu. Mr. Rajagopalchari and I had the honour of seeing this lady spin her 380 counts. The only way in which her *charkha*



materially differed from the common pattern was that it had an unusually large wheel. At the same time it was perfectly light and simple. The first shock of pleasant surprise I had in the matter of handspinning was five years ago when I saw exceedingly fine spinning at Chicacole. But the present experience was something clearly extraordinary. With my perfect eyesight I could certainly see the fine thread while I was standing by the side of the wheel, but Mr. Rajagopalachari had to kneel down to make sure of what he saw.

Immediately after the first visit to these friends I was due at the Women's Home of Service run under the able superintendence of Mrs. Cousins. I was announced to give a demonstration of spinning and other auxiliary processes beside addressing a few words. There was to be a large gathering of ladies. I asked Mr. and Mrs. Ramrao if they would kindly accompany me to this function and if Mrs. Ramrao would treat the gathering to the real music of the spinning wheel. The friends very kindly agreed to go and the reader can well imagine the effect produced on the audience at the Women's Home by the demonstration of Srimati Kamalamma's spinning. The entire audience observed a minute's perfect silence as it listened to the exquisite hum of the *charkha* and wondered whether it was the music of a bee or that of the spinning wheel. At the close of the function Srimati Kamalamma was besieged from all sides with women eager to shower their blessings and gratitude upon her.

In these matter-of-fact days the achievement of Srimati Kamalamma can hardly be said to have received the recognition it deserves. But so far as I am aware certainly no mill can spin so fine a count as this gifted lady.

Much of the outside assistance we had in the work in Adyar was from a small body of earnest young men of the Triplicane Congress Committee. The main function of this group of workers is to afford all kinds of facilities for spinning. To this end they stock cotton and supply slivers or *punis* to all spinners who seek their help. They also stock *charkhas* for sale. They

have engaged a whole time carder who I am glad to be able to note belongs to the 'untouchable' class. It was also in Triplicane that I met a number of Brahman priests who spun yarn for their sacred threads on the *takli*. Some of them were kind enough to spin at a competition in the presence of us and enable us to get at a few figures which we needed. The *takli* they used was made of a splinter of bamboo twelve inches long with a betel nut or a round piece of slate stone at one end and a tiny wooden pin thrust in at the other to serve as a hook. The way they spun defies description. It was magic. The best of these spun at the rate of about 148 yards per hour of 30 to 40 counts. But at another such meeting arranged at Mylapore the result was still more astonishing. The first spinner spun 51 counts at the rate of 201 yards per hour and the next did 46 counts at the same rate of speed.

Another event I must not omit to chronicle is the visit I paid in the company of Mr. Rajagopalachari and Mr. K. Santanam of the Tamil Nadu Khaddar Board to a village named Karikeri to see a carding institution set up by the Board. This is an itinerant institution. It is in charge of a person trained at Sabarmati. The party moves from district to district. The practice is to invite candidates to join the institution for the term of their stay at a particular place and learn carding and spinning. Mr. Santanam would have every one pay more attention than is given to carding. Two men from Adyar have already been sent to Karikeri for training.

Thus gaining experience and knowing more of the vast possibilities of the spinning movement I passed eleven happy days in Madras. After the tenth lesson Dr. Besant felt that she needed no more lessons and kindly gave me leave to return. Would that we the younger generation had the earnestness and the application that the aged lady shows at the age of 82.

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*The following notes by Mahatma Gandhi appeared in 'Young India,'*

*15th January, 1925*

### SIR PRABHASHANKER TO SPIN

The most startling event of the session perhaps was the solemn resolution taken by Sir Prabhashanker Pattani to spin daily for at least half an hour before taking his principal meal so long as he was not too ill to turn the wheel. He has made no exception for travels, for he contends, and rightly, that as he travels always First Class, he should have no difficulty about carrying the wheel with him and spinning during his travels. It is a tremendous step for Sir Prabhashanker. I hope that he will be able to carry out his resolution. His example must give great encouragement to the hand-spinning movement in Kathiawad. Needless to say that Sir Prabhashanker is not expected to join the Kathiawad Sabha. I was anxious to make it clear that though spinning has its political aspect, every spinner need not concern himself with it. It was enough for me if Princes and their ministers spun to set an example and as a token of their identification with those they ruled. The peasantry of Kathiawad has ample leisure. The people are poor. And if the fashion of spinning is set by the ruling class and their ambassadors the people will adopt it and make a substantial addition to the national wealth. The effect of the addition on individuals might be imperceptible, but on the people as a whole it must be most marked.

The reader will be interested to know how Sir Prabhashanker came to take the resolution. He attended the Subjects Committee by invitation as a visitor. After the Spinning Resolution was adopted I invited the members to enroll themselves as spinners. I told them that at Belgaum I had undertaken in common with others to enlist before the 1st of March at least 100 members who would undertake to spin 2,000 yards per

month. I added too, that I would have also two spinners from among the 'unwilling' class. I told the audience that I had hope of Kathiawad giving me the 100 members and that among the two unwilling spinners I had Sir Prabhashanker in mind when I gave the undertaking at Belgaum. Up jumped to his feet Sir Prabhashanker and in solemn tones announced the foregoing resolution amid cheers.

I was to be Sir Prabhashanker's teacher. At the time of writing he had only 3 lessons. On the 3rd day he was able to spin within less than two hours forty-eight yards of even well-twisted yarn of 8 counts. As a matter of fact during the very first lesson lasting half an hour he was able to draw a thread. He then asked to be left alone to battle with the wheel. Let me hope that the other administrators and ministers will copy Sir Prabhashanker's noble resolve to the benefit of themselves and the people under their charge.

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### COTTON COLLECTION

Bhavnagar being a cotton centre it was decided also to collect cotton for distribution among those poor spinners who might be disposed to give half hour's labour but may not be able to give or beg cotton. As a result over 275 maunds of cotton was collected—not a bad result of two days' begging. If the enthusiasm continues, the spinning organisation must prosper in Kathiawad.

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### THE REVOLVING WHEEL

Baro Dada Dwijendra Nath Tagore as the reader knows has a weakness for me. Almost every thing I say or do appeals to him with an irresistible force. The reader is therefore entitled to discount his approval of my ideas and schemes. But he cannot but admire Baro Dada's zeal and devotion for his country which make him keep in touch with the current thought in our politics. Here is his latest on the spinning wheel:

"In practice though not in theory most self-important people fondly believe that what seems improbable to them is impossible and what seems probable to them is alone possible. The enemies of Napoleon once thought that it was as impossible for an army to cross the Alps during the winter season, as it would be to take a flight to the moon by means of a balloon; but Napoleon thought otherwise. To his penetrating view, crossing the Alps was the only means possible by which he could gain entrance into Italy.

"In like manner most of our countrymen think it utterly impossible that the cause of our economical, if not political, freedom can advance a single step by such a simple thing as jalying the Charkha; while on the other hand Mahatmaji thinks that that is the only means possible by adopting which we can hope to reach the goal of our endeavour."

Baro Dada adds in a foot-note that a charkha is philologically equivalent to a circle and metaphorically to the revolving wheel of the universe—*Samsara*. One of Kabir's songs is based on this imagery. But the most important part of Baro Dada's letter is his emphasis on the stern fact that howsoever impossible the Charkha may appear to the worldly wise, it is the only possible thing for the country's real advance. It is the only thing that can give substance to any big political move that the country may make.

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### NON—BRAHMINS

The *Chronicle* invites me to explain my action or inaction in connection with the Non-Brahmin Conference at Belgaum. It surprises me to hear of complaints of indifference on the part of the Congress leaders regarding the Conference. Speaking for myself I was trying to attend all the Conferences consistently with the work I had gone to Belgaum to do. The Non-

Brahmin Conference that was held was not held, so I was told, in response to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation. It was not held on the Congress ground. It was not held in consultation with any Congressman so far as I am aware. I knew nothing of the time or the place of the meeting except through the admission card that was delivered to me in common with numerous such cards. Nevertheless I was anxious to attend it and was trying to fit in my visit there with my other appointments. Unfortunately I was attending to business. I could not leave, whilst the Conference was proceeding. When I finished my work and inquired I found that the Conference was already dissolved. I state these facts merely to show that there was neither disinclination nor discourtesy shown regarding the Conference. What applies to me applies to most leaders. In my opinion it was the duty of the organisers to consult me as to the time of the Conference so as to ensure my attendance. And I would then have made it possible for the other Congress leaders too to go. Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation was not meant for a mechanical act of holding other Conferences during the Congress week. It was to bring the parties together in hearty contact. I find no fault with the organisers of the Non-Brahmin Conference. I am simply endeavouring to show that the Congress leaders would have gladly gone if they could have and if they had been given an opportunity. Since writing the foregoing I have seen Sjt. Gangadhar Rao's explanation which makes the position clearer.

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*22nd January, 1925*

## AN APPEAL

BY M. K. GANDHI

The reader will find something about Kali Paraj in my usual weekly notes. Many outside Gujarat may not know the meaning of Kali Paraj. It literally means black people. The

name seems to have been given to a portion of the people of Gujarat by those who regarded themselves as superior to them. So far as colour is concerned the Kali Paraj are no blacker than or different from the rest. But today they are down-trodden, helpless, superstitious and timid. Their great vice is drink. By far the largest number of them belong to the Baroda State.

It was among these people that a great awakening came three years ago. Thousands left off drink and even flesh-eating. This proved too much for the liquor dealers. Most of these were Parsis. It is said that they tried all the means possible to induce the teetotalers to revert to drink and that they succeeded to a great extent. The officials too are said to have conspired against the reformers. And now whether as a result of these efforts or otherwise there has sprung up among these people a party who teach them to regard temperance as a sin and by ostracism and other means seek to break the spirit and the zeal of those who are battling against themselves and an evil habit handed down from generation to generation.

One of the resolutions passed at the meeting of which I have taken a fairly long notice elsewhere was to ask the States of Baroda, Dharampur and Vamsda and also the British Government to close down all liquor shops. This is a big order, it will be said. The attempt of a whole nation to bring about total prohibition, it will be added, failed miserably. How then can the ineffective appeal of a handful of helpless men and women succeed? There is a great deal of force in the argument. And yet the two attempts stand on a different footing. The attempt of 1921 was directed against the British Government by non-cooperators who were bent on wresting power from the Government. It was moreover directed by those who had not themselves suffered from the existence of liquor shops. Now the appeal comes from those who have been a prey to the evil. It is an appeal from the powerless to the powerful. It is addressed to all the Governments concerned and not merely to the British Government. These men are no non-cooperators. They do

not know the difference between co-operation and non-co-operation. They slave for others unwillingly, almost unknowingly, and often under fear of oppression. They do not know what Swaraj is. To them giving up drink and removal of the temptation in the shape of liquor shops is Swaraj. Their appeal therefore is on humanitarian grounds and should prove irresistible.

As President, I am bound to give effect to their resolution addressed to the Governments concerned. The appeal to the British Government can only be through the Legislators. It is open to the Councillors to forego the liquor revenue even though they may have to run the risk of starving the education department. I invite them to see the people themselves and have an ocular demonstration of the evil that is corrupting a whole race of men and women. They must dare to do the right thing if they will save their countrymen.

It is different with the States of Baroda, Dharampur and Vamsda. They can, if they will, shut up the liquor shops and save their people and themselves from destruction. I use the pronoun 'themselves' deliberately, because the destruction of a large body of people in small states means their own destruction. Will they not listen to the appeal of those who want to be helped against themselves?

And of the Parsi liquor dealers? I know that it is with them a question of livelihood. But they belong to one of the most enterprising of races among men. They are resourceful and intelligent. They can easily find other honourable means of livelihood. Men and women have been known before now to give up questionable callings and take up work or profession conducive to the moral growth of society. I claim the right to speak to the Parsis, for I know and love them. Some of the best of my associates have been and are Parsis. They have done much for India. They have given Dadabhai and Pherozesha Mehta. More is expected of those who do much. Let the Parsi liquor dealers commence by abstaining from interference (assuming the truth of the charge) with the reform.



*22nd January, 1925*

### UNTOUCHABILITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The following is a free rendering of Mr. Gandhi's speech at the Untouchability Conference held at Belgaum during the Congress week :—

Friends,

It was hardly necessary to ask me to express my views on the subject of Untouchability. I have declared times without number from various public platforms that it is the prayer of my heart that if I should fail to obtain *moksha* in this very birth I might be born a Bhangi in my next. I believe in Varnashram both according to birth and to karma. But I do not regard Bhangi's as in any sense a low order. On the contrary I know many Bhangis who are worthy of reverence. On the other hand there are Brahmins going about whom it would be very difficult to regard with any reverence. Holding these views, therefore, if there is a rebirth in store for me, I wish to be born a pariah in the midst of pariahs, because thereby I would be able to render more effective service to them and also be in a better position to plead with other communities on their behalf.

But just as I do not want the so called touchables to despise the untouchables, so also I do not want the latter to entertain any feeling of hatred and ill-will towards the former. I do not want them to wrest their rights by violence as is done in the West. The trend of world opinion is against such violence. I can clearly see a time coming in the world when it will be impossible to secure rights by arbitrament of force, so I tell my untouchable brethren today as I tell the Government, that if they resort to force for the attainment of their purpose they shall certainly fail.

I want to uplift Hinduism. I regard the untouchables as an integral part of the Hindu community. I am pained when I see a single Bhangi driven out of the fold of Hinduism. But I do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated. I

believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in the Gita. The Gita teaches us that members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same *dharma* for the Brahmin as for the Bhangi. But it insists that the latter shall be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning. It is therefore our duty to see that the untouchables do not feel that they are despised or looked down upon. Let them not be offered leavings from our plates for their subsistence. How can I accord differential treatment to any person, be he Brahmin or Bhangi, who worships the same God and keeps his body and soul pure and clean? I for one would regard myself as having sinned if I gave to a Bhangi unclean food from the leavings from the kitchen or failed to render him personal assistance when he was in need.

Let me make my position absolutely clear. While I do hold that the institution of Untouchability as it stands today has no sanction in Hinduism, Hinduism does recognise 'untouchability' in a limited sense and under certain circumstances. For instance, every time that my mother handled unclean things she became untouchable for the time being and had to cleanse herself by bathing. As a Vaishnava I refuse to believe that anyone can be regarded untouchable by reason of his or her birth, and such untouchability as is recognized by religion is by its very nature transitory,—easily removable and referable to the deed not the doer. Not only that. Just as we revere our mother for the sanitary service that she renders us when we are infants, and the greater her service the greater is our reverence for her, similarly the Bhangis are entitled to our highest reverence for the sanitary service they perform for society.

Now another point. I do not regard inter-dining and inter-marriage as essential to the removal of Untouchability. I believe in Varnashram Dharma. But I eat with Bhangis. I do not know whether I am a Sannyasi, for I seriously doubt whether in this Kaliyuga it is at all possible for any one to fulfil the conditions prescribed for a Sannyasi. But I am moving delibe-

rately in the direction of *sannyasa*. It is, therefore, not only not necessary for me to observe these restrictions but their observance may be even harmful for me. As regards the question of inter-marriage, it does not arise in cases like mine. Sufficient for me to say that my scheme does not include intermarriage. Let me tell you that in my own clan all the members do not interdine. In certain cases among our Vaishnava families they do not use each other's utensils or even cook food on fire fetched from others' kitchens. You may call this practice superstitious, but I do not regard it as such. It certainly does no harm to Hinduism. In my Ashram, Dudhabhai, one of the 'untouchable' inmates, dines with the rest without any distinction. But I do not recommend anybody outside the Ashram to follow this example. Again, you know the esteem in which I hold Malaviyaji. I would wash his feet. But he would not take food touched by me. Am I to resent it as a mark of contempt? Certainly not, because I know that no contempt is meant.

The religion to which I belong prescribes for our observance *Maryada Dharma*. The Rishis of old carried on exhaustive researches through meditation, and as a result of the researches they discovered some great truths, such as have no parallel perhaps in any other religion. One of these was that they regarded certain kinds of foods as injurious for the spiritual well-being of man. So they interdicted their use. Now suppose some one had to travel abroad and live among strange people with different customs and standards as regard their diet. Knowing as they did how compelling sometimes the force of social customs of the people among whom men lived was, they promulgated *Maryada Dharma* to help one in such emergencies. Though however, I believe in *Maryada Dharma*, I do not regard it as an essential part of Hinduism. I can even conceive a time when these restrictions might be abolished with impunity. But the reform contemplated in the untouchability movement does not obliterate the restriction as to interdining and inter-marrying. I cannot recommend wholesale abolition of these restrictions to the public, even at the risk of being charged with hypo-

crisy and inconsistency. For instance, I let my son dine freely in Mussalman households because I believe he can take sufficient care as to what to take and what not to take. I myself have no scruples in taking my food in Mussalman households because I have my own strict rules about my diet. Let me tell you of an incident that happened at Aligarh. Swami Satyadev and I were Khwaja Saheb's guests. Swami Satyadev did not share my views. We argued about them. I told him that holding the views I did, it would be as wrong of me to refuse to partake of the food offered by a Mussalman as it would be on his part to transgress his *Maryada*. So Swami Satyadev was provided with separate cooking arrangements. Similarly when I was Bari Saheb's guest he provided us with a Brahmin cook with strict instructions to obtain all the rations for us fresh from the bazaar. When asked why he put himself to such inconvenience he explained that he did so because he wanted to avoid the slightest possibility of suspicion on the part of the public that he entertained any secret designs of proselytisation against me or my companions. That single incident raised Rai Saheb in my esteem. He sometimes commits mistakes, but he is as simple and innocent as a child. And although sometimes people complain of him to me bitterly, my first impression of him still remains.

I have dwelt on this point at such great length, because I want to be absolutely plain with you (untouchables). I do not want to employ diplomacy in my dealings with you or for that matter with any one. I do not want to keep you under any false illusion or win your support by holding out temptations. I want to remove untouchability because its removal is essential for Swaraj and I want Swaraj. But I would not exploit you for gaining any political ends of mine. The issue with me is bigger even than Swaraj. I am anxious to see an end put to Untouchability because for me it is an expiation and a penance. It is not the untouchables whose *Shuddhi* I effect—the thing would be absurd—But my own and that of the Hindu religion. Hinduism has committed a great sin in giving sanc-

tion to this evil and I am anxious—if such a thing as vicarious penance is possible to purify it of that sin by expiating for it in my own person.

That being so, it follows that the only means open to me for my purpose are those of *Ahimsa* and truth. I have adopted an untouchable child as my own. I confess I have not been able to convert my wife completely to my view. She cannot bring herself to love her as I do. But I cannot convert my wife by anger; I can do so only by love. If any of my people have done you any wrong, I ask your forgiveness for it. Some members of the untouchable class said when I was at Poona that they would resort to force if the Hindus did not alter their attitude towards them. Can Untouchability be removed by force? Can the amelioration of the untouchables come through these methods? The only way by which you and I can wean orthodox Hindus from their bigotry is by patient argument and correct conduct. So long as they are not converted, I can only ask you to put up with your lot with patience. I am willing to stand by you and share your sufferings with you. You must have the right of worship in any temple in which members of other castes are admitted. You must have admission to schools along with the children of other castes without any distinction. You must be eligible to the highest office in the land not excluding even that of the Viceroy's. That is my definition of the removal of Untouchability.

But I can help you in this only by following the way indicated by my religion and not by following Western methods. For that way I cannot save Hinduism. Yours is a sacred cause. Can one serve a sacred cause by adopting Satan's methods? I pray you, therefore, to dismiss from your mind the idea of ameliorating your condition by brute force. The Gita tells us that by sincerely meditating on Him in one's heart, one can attain *mokhsa*. Meditation is waiting on God. If waiting on God brings the highest bliss of salvation, how much quicker must it bring removal of Untouchability? Waiting on God means increasing purity. Let us by prayer purify ourselves and

we shall not only remove Untouchability but shall also hasten the advent of Swaraj.

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*5th February, 1925*

## PERTINENT QUESTIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

I printed sometime ago a thoughtful letter from Bengal on the question of untouchability. The writer is still pursuing his diligent search. Now I have a similar search from a Madras correspondent in the form of questions. It is a healthy sign that the orthodox Hindus are moved to an inquiry into this thorny question. There is no denying the earnestness of the framer of the questions. They are typical because there is hardly one among the long list that has not been put to me in my rambles. In the hope, therefore, that my answers may guide the path of the correspondent who claims to be a worker and an earnest seeker, and such other workers and seekers, I make an attempt to solve the many riddles presented by my correspondent.

Q. What are the practical steps to be taken to remove untouchability?

A. To open to untouchables all public schools, temples and roads that are open to non-Brahmins and are not exclusively devoted to any particular caste.

For caste Hindus to open schools for their children, to dig wells for them where they are in need and to render them all personal service that they may need, e. g. to carry on temperance and hygienic reform among them and to provide them with medical aid.

Q. What would be the religious status of the untouchables when the ban of untouchability is completely removed?

A. The religious status would be the same as that of the caste Hindus. They will therefore be classed as Shudras instead of Adi Shudras.

Q. What would be the relation between the untouchable

and the highcaste orthodox Brahmin, when untouchability is removed?

A. The same as with non-Brahmin Hindus.

Q. Do you advocate inter-mingling of castes?

A. I would abolish all castes and would keep the four divisions.

Q. Why should not the untouchables build temples for their own worship, without interfering with the existing temples?

A. The 'higher' castes have not left them much capacity for such enterprise. It is the wrong way of looking at the question to say that they interfere with our temples. We the so-called higher caste men have to do our duty by admitting them to the temples common to all Hindus.

Q. Are you an advocate of communal representation, and do you hold that the untouchables must have representation in all administrative bodies?

A. I am not. But if the untouchables are purposely shut out by the influential classes, it would be an improper exclusion barring the road to Swaraj. My disapproval of communal representation does not mean exclusion of any community from representation but on the contrary, it lays the burden on the represented communities to see to the proper representation of the unrepresented or inadequately represented communities.

Q. Are you a believer in the efficacy of Varnashrama Dharma?

A. Yes. But there is today a travesty of *varna*, no trace of *ashram* and a misrepresentation of *dharma*. The whole system needs to be revised and brought in unison with the latest discoveries in the field of religion.

Q. Don't you believe that India is Karma-Bhumi, and that everybody born here is endowed with wealth and intelligence, social status and religious aspirations according to his good or ill deeds in his previous birth?

A. Not in the sense the correspondent means. For everybody everywhere reaps as he sows. But India is essentially

*Karmabhumi* (land of duty) in contradistinction to *Bhogabhumi* (land of enjoyment)

Q. Is not education and reform among the untouchables a primary condition to be fulfilled ere one can begin to talk of the removal of untouchability?

A. There can be no reform or education among the untouchables without the removal of untouchability.

Q. Is it not natural, and just as it should be, that non-drunkards avoid drunkards, and that vegetarians avoid non-vegetarians?

A. Not necessarily. A teetotaler would regard it as his duty to associate with his drunkard brother for the purpose of weaning him from the evil habit. So may a vegetarian seek out a non-vegetarian.

Q. Is it not true, that a pure man (in the sense that he is a teetotaler, and vegetarian) easily becomes an impure man (in the sense that he becomes a drunkard, and non-vegetarian,) when he is made to mingle with men, who drink, and kill, and eat animals?

A. A man who being unconscious of the wrong, drinks wine and eats flesh foods, is not necessarily an impure man. But I can understand the possibility of evil resulting from one being *made* to mingle with a corrupt person. In our case, however, there is no case of *making* anyone associate with untouchables.

Q. Is it not owing to the above fact that a certain class of orthodox Brahmins do not mingle with the other castes (including the untouchables), but constitute themselves into a separate class, and live together for their spiritual uplift?

A. It must be a poor spirituality that requires to be locked up in a safe. Moreover days are gone when men used to guard their virtue by permanent isolation.

Q. Would you not be interfering with the religions and caste-system (Varnashram Dharma) of India, whatever may be the bad or good points of the above systems and religions, if you advocate the removal of untouchability?



A. How do I interfere with anything or anybody by mere advocacy of a reform? Interference there would be, if I were to advocate removal of untouchability by the use of force against those who retain untouchability.

Q. Would you not be guilty of doing *himsa* to the orthodox Brahmins, if you interfere with their religious beliefs without convincing them in the first instance?

A. I cannot be guilty of *himsa* to the orthodox Brahmins as I do not interfere with their religious belief except through conviction.

Q. Are not the Brahmins guilty of untouchability, when they do not touch, dine with or marry the various other castes, leaving alone the untouchables?

A. Brahmins are guilty of the sin if they refuse to 'touch' the other castes.

Q. Does it satisfy the hunger of the untouchable when he is made to parade Brahmin *agraharams*, in the exercise of his right as a man?

A. Man does not live by bread alone. Many prefer self-respect to food.

Q. Does not Satyagraha in this direction lead to violence, seeing that the untouchables are not so well educated as to understand the full doctrine of non-violent non-co-operation, and also seeing that the Brahmin cares more for his religion than for politics?

A. If reference is to Vykom, experience shows that the 'untouchable' has shown amazing self-restraint. The latter part of the question suggests the possibility of violence by the Brahmins concerned. I should be sorry if *they* resort to violence. They would then have shown, in my opinion, not regard for religion but ignorance of and contempt for religion.

Q. Do you advocate that all should become 'equal', without any distinction of caste, race, creed or avocation?

Such should be the case in the eye of the law in the matter of elementary human rights, even as irrespective of caste,

ace, creed or colour, we have certain things in common, *e. g.* hunger, thirst etc.

Q. Would that supreme philosophical truth be of any use in the field of practical politics, to the average *Grihastha* or householder, seeing that only great souls, who have come to the end of their cycle of *Karmā*, could realise and practise that supreme philosophical truth, and not the ordinary *Garhasthr*, who has only to follow what the Rishis have ordained, and in that following, get discipline, which consequently leads to release from birth and death?

A. Not much 'supreme philosophical truth' is involved in the recognition of the simple truth that no human being is to be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth. The truth is so simple that it is recognised all over the world except by orthodox Hindus. I have questioned the statement that the Rishis taught the doctrine of untouchability as we practise it.

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5th February, 1925

## ON ANOTHER'S LAND

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend says, "you ask us at every turn to yield to Mussalmans, you ask us not to resort to law courts on any account. Have you fully considered the consequences of what you are saying? Have you taken into account human nature? What are we to do when mosques are being put up on our ground without our permission? What are we to do when unscrupulous men bringing suits against us for moneys we do not owe or when they actually rob us of our possessions? In giving your answers you must take our poor selves into consideration. You dare not say you do not know us. Or if you give your *fatwas* in utter obliviousness of us, you must not blame us if we do not respond to your counsels of perfection.

Let me tell you that you are sometimes impossible." I sympathise with the friends who talk to me in this strain. I am prepared to recognise the limitations of human nature for the very simple reason that I recognise my own. But precisely as recognising my own limitations, I do not deceive myself by refusing to distinguish between what I ought to do and what I fail to do. I must not deceive others by refusing to notice the same distinction and telling them that what they propose to do is not only perhaps defensible but also right. Many things are impossible and yet are the only things right. A reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct. Whoever thought it possible before Edison to speak to people hundreds of miles away from us? Marconi went a step further and made wireless communication possible. We are daily witnessing the phenomenon of the impossible of yesterday becoming the possible of today. As in physical science so in psychological.

Now for the concrete questions. The question of mosques built on another's land without his permission is incredibly simple. If A is in possession of his land and someone comes to build something on it, be it even a mosque, A has the right at the first opportunity of pulling down the structure. Any building of the shape of a mosque is not a mosque. A building to be a mosque must be duly consecrated. A building put up on another's land without his permission is a pure robbery. Robbery cannot be consecrated. If A has not the will or the capacity to destroy the building misnamed mosque, he has the right of going to a law court to have the building pulled down. Law courts are forbidden to convicted non-co-operators but not to those who require such conviction. Moreover full non-co-operation we have never practised. A practice has a flaw in it when it is not only inconvenient but clearly defeats the end it was designed to serve. So long as I own property I must defend it whether by the force of law courts or by the force of my own strong arms. The act is in essence the same. Our

national non-co-operation is or was with a system. It presupposed co-operation among ourselves in a general way. But when we non-co-operate among ourselves, national non-co-operation is a mirage. Individual non-co-operation is possible when we own not a cold of earth. It is possible only for a *Sanyasin*. The highest fulfilment of religion therefore requires a giving up of all possession. Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way. When a robber comes to take away A's property he can deliver the property to him, if he recognises in him a blood brother. If he does not feel like one but dreads the robber and would wish that some one was near to knock him down, he must try to knock him down and take the consequence. If he has the desire but not the ability to fight the robber, he must allow himself to be robbed and then call in the assistance of law courts to regain the lost property. In both the cases he has as good a chance of losing his property as of regaining it. If he is a sane man like me, he would reach with me the conclusion that to be really happy he must not own anything or own things only so long as his neighbours permit him. In the last resort we live not by our physical strength but by sufferance. Hence the necessity of uttermost humility and absolute reliance on God. This is living by soul-force. This is highest self-expression.

Let us bear the law in mind not as an academic and attractive proposition when it is written on paper but as the law of our being to be continually realised and let us fashion our practice in accordance with the law *and* the measure of our ability to live up to it.

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*The following notes by Mahatma Gandhi appeared in 'Young India' 5th February, 1925.*

### WELL DONE

The Secretary, Taluka Congress Committee, Haliyal, Karwar, writes :

"Our Municipality here has a Congress majority. We are therefore trying to carry out the Congress programme through it. Spinning has been made compulsory in the municipal schools. Municipal employees have khaddar costumes given to them. Primary education of the children of depressed classes has been made free and compulsory. Their children sit side by side with other children. They are permitted to make use of the common tank. We have no Hindu-Muslim or Brahmin non-Brahmin differences. We are organising a temperance campaign."

This is all good and substantial work. I congratulate the Haliyal Taluka Congress Committee on its solid constructive work and wish that others will follow them.

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### WASTE OF YARN

A friend from Kumbakonam writes :—

"Perhaps you are aware of a custom, now prevalent in the country, to honour political leaders with hand-spun yarn garlands. Such garlands are invariably used on every political occasion and I may add that an enormous quantity of hand-spun yarn is wasted since none takes care of it. As an example of such waste, I have sent per separate post, a parcel of yarn which I was able to pick up at the Tamil Nadu Khilafat Conference held recently at Kumbakonam under the Presidency of Maulana Shaukat Ali. But for my interest in the yarn 960 yards of yarn would have gone to waste. I am sure that at the said Conference alone, much larger quantity of yarn had been wasted. Hence I would like to suggest to you to instruct our countrymen through *Young India* to prepare garlands in hanks

of uniform length, say 2000 yards, so that at every meeting garlands of 2000 yards may be collected and utilised according as the garlanded leaders propose."

I can endorse the correspondent's complaint as to waste. It is a good custom to present leaders with yarn garlands but they should be prettily made and not much yarn should be used in them. If the idea be to present yarn to leaders and not to garland them, the correspondent's suggestion should be adopted and uniform size hanks should be given. For, if the habit of presenting yarn garlands becomes universal and care is not taken, there might be an enormous waste of good yarn which might otherwise have been utilised for making cheap Khaddar for poor people.

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## TOWARDS UNITY

The All Parties Committee met to consider the questions referred to it by the Conference. It appointed a sub-committee of nearly fifty to consider the question. The sub-committee appointed a smaller committee to consider all possible Swaraj schemes and report to the sub-committee the results of its deliberations. Dr. Besant is labouring at this smaller committee with her usual application and energy which put to shame younger men and women. But naturally the attention centred round the Hindu-Muslim problem; not that it is intrinsically more important except for individuals like me but because it blocks all progress towards Swaraj. The sub-committee proved too formal for the task. It was necessary to avoid the reserve and the stiffness even of a committee and to be absolutely informal and to have a still smaller number of persons. This was done and a few of each community met at Hakim Saheb's house. The result has been succinctly given to the Press by Pandit Motilalji Nehru. I agree that there is no cause for anxiety or disappointment. For all want a solution

Some want it at once, some regard the time not to be seasonable, some would sacrifice everything to get a solution, others would be cautious and would wait till they have secured what to them is an indispensable minimum. But all agreed that a solution of the problem was essential to Swaraj. And as all want Swaraj, a solution must not be beyond the reach of those who are engaged in finding it. The prospect was never so bright as when we parted to meet again on 28th February. Meanwhile every one is to explore fresh avenues to a settlement.

The public will want to know my view of communal representation. I am opposed to it with all my heart but I would agree to anything so long as it ensures peace and is honourable to both the parties. In the absence of agreement on the plans suggested by either party, I have presented a solution which might answer the purpose. But I need not discuss it at the present stage. I hope that the responsible members of both the communities will leave no stone unturned whether by means of private, quiet talks or by means of a public expression of their opinions. I hope too that newspaper-men will write nothing to irritate any party but will observe discreet silence where they cannot usefully assist.

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*12th February, 1925*

### A SILENT WORKER

A Chittagong correspondent sends me the following story of a silent worker :—

“Sreejut Kalisanker Chakrabartee, a silent but indefatigable worker of Chittagong has, of late, arranged practical demonstrations of charkha. He does not believe in wordy battles. He personally approaches four families every morning with his big Charkha, spins before them by way

of giving the first lesson and begs of them their contributions. The process may seem futile to some, but the melodious sound and sweet music of the Charkha, preceded by the recitation of a prayer, in the early hours of the day wonderfully conquers the sceptic, who orders a good Charkha and promises due contributions. Uncompromising unbelievers who sneered at the Charkha are daily won over. The businesslike promptitude with which Kalisanker Babu is progressing, ensures success. He has set an example to other workers who may if they choose copy it with profit to themselves and the country."

I have taken the liberty of condensing the letter and making its English readable. I commend the letter to the attention of all workers. There is no doubt that example is better than precept.

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*12th March, 1925*

## SWADESHI AND NATIONALISM

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following from a friend has been on my file for a long time :

"No doubt you have read Mr. Romain Rolland's book entitled 'Mahatma Gandhi.' On page 176 of this book appears this paragraph : 'What is this but the triumph of nationalism—the narrowest and most unpolluted? Stay at home, shut all doors, change nothing, hold on to everything. Export nothing, buy nothing, uplift and purify body and spirit! A gospel indeed of medieval monks! *And Gandhi of the broad mind, lets his name be associated with it!* (By way of preface to D.B. Kalelkar's 'Gospel of Swadeshi'.) Coming from an ardent admirer of yours, this indeed calls for an answer from you. I notice in the November 27 issue of *Young India*, you append a note at the foot of Mr.



Andrews' article entitled 'Truth about Nationalism,' which purports to state that Indian Swadeshi cannot become impure or racial. Will you not stretch the argument further in a subsequent issue and allay the fears of the author of this wonderful book and its innumerable readers?"

So far as D. B. Kalelkar's pamphlet is concerned, the position is this. It is a rendering of a Gujarati pamphlet. My preface was to the original. D. B. Kalelkar is a valued associate. I therefore wrote the half dozen lines of preface also in Gujarati without studying the pamphlet. I had only glanced at passages here and there. I knew my friend's views on Swadeshi. I had no difficulty about identifying myself with them. But at the instance of Mr. Andrews, I have read the translation and I confess that the presentment is narrow in places. I have discussed them with Mr. Kalelkar too and he agrees that they do read narrow in the translation for which he is not responsible. So far as my own views are concerned, my writings in *Young India* make it quite plain that my Swadeshi, and for that matter Mr. Kalelkar's is not as narrow as the pamphlet would lead one to suppose.

So much for the pamphlet itself.

My definition of Swadeshi is well known. I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India. I hold it to be sinful for me to continue to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth, although it may be

superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun, My Swadeshi therefore chiefly centres round the hand-spun Khaddar and extends to every thing that can be and is produced in India. My nationalism is as broad as my Swadeshi. I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If therefore India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health giving spices, but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.

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*14th May, 1925*

## THE HANDLOOM

BY M. K. GANDHI

The Director of Information has circulated a memorandum on handloom weaving done under the Department of Industries and Commerce. I publish below the salient extracts from the memorandum:

“For some fifteen years past Government has been trying to secure the introduction of better and more economical methods and appliances in the handloom weaving, dyeing and calico printing industries.

“Handloom weaving is still a very important industry in this Presidency, for it supplies more than one quarter of the total cloth required by the population of the Presidency, and during the past thirty years handlooms have increased their output almost as fast as power looms.

“Under the control of the Department of Industries there were four weaving schools and seven weaving demonstrations in progress and these were continued during last year. One of their functions is to help in the introduction of the fly-shuttle loom, which increases the output of the individual weaver by 40 per cent. In these schools instruction is given to boys in

weaving cotton and mercerized brodered sarees, silk sarees, dhoties, shirtings etc., of somewhat complicated and fancy designs which serve as good object lessons to other weavers working in the vicinity of the schools. All these schools are equipped with khadi (*i.e.* pit) looms for beginners and saree looms for advanced pupils. It may be noted that although last year was not a prosperous one for the mill industry, yet it was fairly favourable to handloom workers who, at centres where silk and other fancy cloth was prepared, could earn from Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 a month, while on khadi (pit) and other cotton looms the wages did not amount to more than Rs. 35 a month.

“The experiment of training agriculturists in hand-weaving as a spare time occupation was continued at Hoshalli in the Dharwar District. Accommodation was provided for 8 agriculturists at a time in the school and as a result six of the first batch took up hand-weaving seriously by purchasing fly-shuttle looms and the others have announced their intention of doing so. At Hulkotti where the experiment was carried out in the previous year, two dozen fly-shuttle looms were introduced among the agriculturists.

“The Weavers' Association of Dhulia petitioned to the Department to open a demonstration of automatic looms and allied appliances. This was done, but the weavers could not see their way to purchasing the machines which are somewhat expensive. A hand-sizing machine, however, was found to be so great an improvement on the existing methods that arrangements were made to produce copies of it locally. The Department is now demonstrating a number of machines at Sholapur, a large centre for handloom weaving, where hundreds of fly-shuttle handlooms are found to work economically in competition with power mills. The handloom weaver can compete with the power mill worker so far as the weaving operation is concerned, but his preparatory processes such as winding, twisting, doubling and sizing are slow and defective and form a considerable handicap.

"An illustration of the usefulness of the demonstration work carried out by the Department of Industries is to be found at Bhiwandi in Thana District. In the year 1916 weaving schools were opened here and a number of fly-shuttle looms introduced amongst the weavers. A census and survey of the handloom industry in this town taken last year show that out of a total number of 1,800 handlooms nearly 1,500 were fitted with fly-shuttle slays. This illustrates how improved working methods continue to spread in a weaving locality even after the weaving school which introduced them on a small scale has been closed.

"Demonstrations of improved methods of dyeing met with success in Faizpur, Dhulia Charni (Khandesh) and Malegaon."

May I point out to the Department that the attempt to introduce the handloom in the homes of agriculturists is foredoomed to failure? A little knowledge of the agricultural life will demonstrate the impracticability of such introduction. Hand-weaving is a long process requiring sustained labour and in itself demanding several processes at which more than one person is required to work at one and the same time. This is not possible in a peasant's cottage. Hence from times immemorial hand-weaving has been a separate occupation and an independent and sole means of livelihood. A peasant requires an auxiliary occupation which he can take up or leave at will. Such an occupation for the millions is only hand-spinning. There are, no doubt, other such occupations for utilising odd moments. But no other than hand-spinning will be found to serve millions of men and women. Hence if the Department of Industries will justify its existence and will think in terms of the millions rather than of individuals and of India rather than of England, then it will devote its attention principally to hand-spinning, organise it among the villagers and make improvements in the various methods of hand-spinning. I am glad to note here that the kindred department in Bengal is turning its attention to hand-spinning though still in a perfunctory manner. This hand spinning is the one thing in which the Government, if it at all means well, can co-operate with the

people in making it a success. We have often been told to co-operate with the Government. The proper and natural thing, however, is for the Government to co-operate with the people, anticipate their wants and provide for them. I would also take the liberty of pointing out to the department that until they control all the processes cotton has to go through before it is brought to the loom, the latter will act merely as feeder to Manchester, Japan or even Bombay. Whereas the business of the Department is or should be to teach the villager to subject the produce of his field to all the processes in his own home or village so that he has a variety of occupation and so that he may not feel stranded and helpless when famine or flood overtakes him and leaves him without crops and without work.

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*28th May, 1925*

### RYOTS' CRY

BY M. K. GANDHI

As my Bengal tour progresses, the addresses I receive are becoming more and more businesslike. Instead of containing praises of me and my work they are becoming instructive, containing valuable information. One such address was from Tipperah Ryots' Association. It contained these pregnant sentences:

"We may tell you that the ryots of Tipperah—half-starved, half-naked, without health, without education,—are the greatest of sufferers. We are the food-producers of the people and deserve the kindest consideration, but are really the least cared for in every way. We represent nearly 90% of the people, so that it may truly be said that Tipperah, means the ryot. We have fieldwork only for about six months, when we work day and night; but for the remaining six months we have no employment on

a living wage, and have to starve. When our small and always insufficient stock of food-grain is used up we have no cash to buy food, with, and have to resort to the money-lender who charges fabulous rates of interest whether in money or grain, for there are no village banks of the Raiffeisen type to help us. As a consequence, we are unable to clear our debts, and our holdings are sold away to money-lenders and other profiteering middlemen who have no interest in food-production. We become thereby reduced to mere land-less labourers without any right, and perish from starvation with wife and children. The sight would sicken your heart. Our lands do indeed produce jute. The rule always is that the producer fixes the price. But for some mysterious cause the price of jute is under the absolute control of the foreign merchant and the middleman, so that we are always compelled to sell our jute at a price that does not even cover the cost of production.

"We, Ryots are not allowed to cut down trees on the land for which we pay rent, nor are we permitted to excavate tanks, though we should perish with family for want of drinking water. For want of suitable training the *Charkha* has not yet become a home-industry with us, and therefore, does not provide employment for our unemployed when we are free from field-labour. You will kindly draw the special attention of the Congress-workers to this point. We ryots are being ruined by litigation. The so-called settlements are periodical unsettlements to ruin the Ryots, while they afford a bumper crop of litigation to large and powerful vested interests.

"We approach you on behalf of the Ryots of Tipperah to ask you to leave no stone unturned to give them relief. Your noble example has already set to work other kindred spirits on your line, and it is hoped that substantial relief will come to us at no distant date."

Let me assure the reader that I have only omitted the usual opening and the concluding brief one sentence paragraph and half a sentence of unnecessary epithets. I am prepared to believe that there is exaggeration in the foregoing statement. But I cannot help remarking that on the whole it is fair statement of the ryots' position from their own point of view. The most remarkable part in the statement is that relating to six months' unemployment. It is an echo of the other parts of the country. Many people work on their miserably small holdings for six months, and for six months they labour in factories far away from their homes. A studious reader will notice that this unemployment naturally occupies the first place in the tale of woes. It is also mainly the cause of the other troubles mentioned. If they had steady work in their own homes for the whole of the year, they would not be obliged to run to the money-lender. If they had anything to lay by, they would not be obliged to sell their jute at rates dictated to them. Six months' industrial employment must revolutionise their lives.

But they say they do not know spinning. They want me to tell the Congressmen to take note of the fact. I wish I could fire Congressmen with my faith in and zeal for the Charkha. Of course, they should, as representatives of the people, spread themselves among them and take to them the message of the wheel. In taking that message and in inducing them to spin, they will automatically know many things about them and share their sorrows as well as their rejoicings. Congressmen may not descend upon villages as locusts upon crops, but they should approach them as loving messengers to understand their wants and to help them to better their condition. I should not be at all sorry or upset, if, after having gone there to spread spinning, they find it necessary to render some other help instead. Let them go to the villages and stay there as servants. Everyone whom I meet agrees that it is necessary to work among the villages but few actually do so. Of those who have gone to the villages the majority find the spinning-wheel the proper instrument of service. But the

villages are seven hundred thousand and we have not perhaps seven hundred true village-workers in all India. The ryots' address is a rebuke and a reminder to us. It will be time to speak of Swaraj when we have a respectable number of workers in the villages.

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*28th May, 1925*

## NATIONAL SERVICE AND PAY

BY M. K. GANDHI

"In the *Young India* of the 30th April you say that you draw nothing from the A. I. C. C. or the Gujarat Committee, but depend upon the help of your friends. This has put me in a great fix. I have been for the last 5 years doing the Khilafat and the Congress work, and for the last 3 years been drawing an allowance from the Central Khilafat Committee. From your and Ali Brothers' occasional utterances I believed that it is nothing less than an honour to do national work on a living wage. Now I find that you, too, try to assure us that you take nothing from the national funds, but are helped by friends. Maulana Shaukat Ali and, if I remember aright, Maulana Mohamed Ali have said the very same thing on different occasions.

"From these, I was forced to conclude that in your heart of hearts you disapprove the very idea of national service. How can a soldier conscientiously accept his pay from the exchequer when the Commander-in-Chief scrupulously refuses to have anything to do with it? I cannot say of other workers, but I beg to submit that your note, however pleasing to others, has greatly disenchanted me, and now I see my folly in giving up my profession for national service. Believe me, I neither blame you nor the respected Ali Brothers. I only blame myself,



for it was my look-out to understand that national work is meant for those who are either rich, or fortunate enough to have rich friends. I may be mistaken, but in my humble opinion national work cannot allure conscientious workers if leaders like yourself, the Ali Brothers, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das, consider it beneath their dignity to be put on the nation's Civil List."

Thus writes a correspondent. It is evident that he is not a constant reader of *Young India*, or else he would have noticed that I have said repeatedly that I would deem it an honour to belong to paid national service. My travelling and other such expenses stand on a different footing. I cannot charge them against the Congress without a vote. I do not travel in virtue of any resolution of the Congress or at its instance. I travel at the call of different provinces. It would be quite wrong for me to charge these expenses against the Congress or to ask the Congress to vote them. The correspondent does not know that even members of the A. I. C. C., when they attend in answer to a summon from the Congress, make no charge against it. The Congress funds would be soon exhausted if such a charge was made. But if I became a wholetime Congress worker in the technical sense of the term, and if we had a paid national service, I should be the first to put myself on the pay list for the sake of encouraging others. Such a service we have not yet established and I have found many practical difficulties in evolving a scheme, whether for the whole of India or even for Gujarat. More than once I have been obliged to drop it no sooner than I had conceived it. The correspondent, therefore, need have no qualms of conscience in drawing pay from the Khilafat Office for work honestly done. If it be any consolation to him, let him know that the Ali Brothers did charge the Khilafat Committee travelling expenses when they travelled at its instance. Let him have the further consolation of knowing that the Khilafat Committee bore my travelling expenses twice or thrice, when I

travelled with the Ali Brothers on what was regarded as mainly Khilafat work. I could even then have fallen back upon friends, but I deemed it an honour to call myself one of the Khilafat party. If Ali Brothers do not and did not charge their personal expenses against the Khilafat Committee, it was because their obligations were larger than they could legitimately ask the Khilafat Committee to discharge. If they had, it would have been a bad precedent.

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*4th June, 1925*

### KHADI PRATISHTHAN

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have elsewhere dealt with the development of spinning as part of flood and famine relief. It is an experiment standing by itself. But the experience gained therein by Acharya Ray and his right-hand-man, as he loves to call Satish Babu, was not to end with the experiment. They are both chemists. Their scientific minds compel them to explore the possibilities of the wheel and Khaddar as a permanent supplementary industry for the Bengal agriculturists. From a small experiment it has developed into a big organisation called Khadi Pratishthan. It has branches in many parts of Bengal and contemplates opening more. Its object is to manufacture and sell pure Khaddar and popularise the wheel and Khaddar through publications, lantern lectures etc. In order to give it a more stable character it has been converted into a public trust. I have before me the trust-deed and the balance sheet. I mention these facts as I promised an inquirer at a public meeting at Pabna that I shall deal with the Pratishthan work in the pages of *Young India*. I was recommending the universal adoption in Bengal of the Pratisthan Charkha as I have found it to be the best available in Bengal, and as experiments are being daily made to improve it. The inquirer in question

thereupon complained of the high prices of Pratishtan Khaddar. And I promised to deal with the complaint through these pages. The charge may be considered true in a sense. The idea is to manufacture Khaddar on the largest scale and to introduce the wheel in every home. The authors of the trust want to make Khaddar self-supporting and improve the quality of yarn. The management must work in those centres too which are not at present favourable for Khaddar manufacture. Thus it pools all the Khaddar it manufactures and charges an average price. It follows, therefore, that those who operate in favourable centres only can sell Khaddar cheaper than the Pratishtan. This is no matter for embarrassment for the time-being, as the few centres that are manufacturing pure Khaddar have their own customers who do not concern themselves with the prices. The Pratishtan sells Khaddar even now at a loss but it seeks to minimise the loss. It cannot always be run on donations. I am satisfied that every attempt is being made to reduce the price of Khaddar sold by the Pratishtan. It cannot be too widely known that nobody has any private interest in the Pratishtan. The main actors have their own sources of income. They have given to the Pratishtan. They take nothing from it. So far I have inspected five other organised centres of Khaddar manufacture. These are the Abhoy Ashram at Comilla. Dr. Prafula Ghosh's Ashram at Malikanda, Pravartak Sangh's at Chittagong, Satsang Ashram at Pabna and Duadano Khadi Kendra. The latter I have not seen personally but I had the pleasure of meeting the principal workers and seeing their Khaddar and wheels at Hooghly. The Pravartak Sangh has hitherto dealt in half-Khaddar too. But it has now definitely decided to deal exclusively in pure Khaddar so far as Chittagong is concerned. It had already started the experiment at Kutiaudu but the management made the final decision for the whole of the Chittagong District during my visit there. They have still half-Khaddar at their Calcutta depot and at the head office at Chandranagar. But they are striving to do away with half-Khaddar altogether at the first opportunity. They

accept the principle that it is not in the interest of the Khaddar movement to deal in half-Khaddar. All these activities are good. Some work is being done officially too by the Congress organisations. As a matter of fact I regard all these organisations as Congress activities in spirit though not in name. What is, however, necessary is to co-ordinate these scattered forces and economise time, talent, labour and funds. The heads of these organisations must meet together, compare notes and evolve a joint programme of action. It must come in time. In any case, the question is whether the time can be hastened. The Khadi Pratishthan has an advantage over all in that it has men who have dedicated themselves solely to the spread of the message of the Charkha. It has great organising talent at its service. It has a celebrated name behind it. It has therefore, limitless scope for expansion. Hence it is that I commend its activity to the whole of India in general and Bengal in particular. I invite the critics to examine it critically and demonstrate its short-comings if they discover any. I invite sympathisers to study its accounts which are an open book and help it. And I invite the indifferent to throw off their indifference and after studying it oppose its activities or support them. Dr. Ray has a world-wide reputation as a scientist. But the millions of his countrymen will not know him for the fine soaps he may manufacture, nor yet for the careers he has found for many a young Bengali. They will know him for the light and comfort his Khaddar-work may bring into their humble cottages. Let his organisation be like a vast Banyan tree giving shelter to all small sister organisations that would receive help and guidance from it. The Khadi Pratishthan is more than the Chemical Works great as they are. For the former has its roots in the country's soil. It is not a superimposition. It requires more deliberate handling for its growth. It will evoke the best in every one of its organisers, if it is to grow into a huge national organisation. May it fulfill all the expectations of which it seems to me to give promise.

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11th June, 1925

NOT MAN'S WORK ?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Thus writes a professor :

" Personally, I have full faith in the spinning wheel and Khaddar. I fully understand that without Khaddar there can be no common bond between the classes and the masses of India. And without a common bond, without feeling as one, no country can accomplish anything, much less India. Besides, I can very well understand that a success in sufficient production of Khaddar is bound to result in excluding foreign cloth. Khaddar programme must be worked out to a success, if India is to achieve freedom.

" But I am of opinion that you have begun at the wrong end. To ask able-bodied men to sit for spinning, like women, is what appears odd in the eyes of most of the people. I quite appreciate the reflection that we, at present, are no better than women. Still, the reality is that we, all of us, can't take up the work which has been associated in our country, for centuries, with women. Again, I would have consented to shake off this acquired notion, could I be persuaded to believe that at least the female population of the country have taken up the cause of spinning and that it still requires further support from the male population. To ask men to ply the spinning wheel while the female folk strut about in fine foreign *saris* is putting the cart before the horse. Besides, the question of foreign cloth in India is not so much of men's creation as of women's and therefore, I think, to press the use of the spinning wheel and Khaddar on men, instead of women, is to begin the solution at the wrong end.

" In my humble opinion, you should have left men alone, busy with their various sorts of political propagandas and should have taken your message direct to the women of the land. Let your great programme of Charkha and Khaddar be

confined to women for the present and let men fight the battle of freedom with manlier weapons."

The letter was rather long. I have boiled down the argument without changing the language. It is evident the learned professor does not know the condition of the women of India. Or, he would have known that ordinarily men do not get the privilege or the opportunity of addressing women. It has been my good fortune, no doubt, to be able to do so to a certain extent. But in spite of all the facilities given to me, I have not been able to reach them to the extent I have reached men. He should also know that the women cannot act without the consent of men. I can quote several instances where men have prevented women from adopting the Charkha or Khaddar. Thirdly, women cannot make the inventions and the changes that men can make. Had the movement of spinning been confined only to women, it would have been impossible to make the improvements that the Charkha has undergone during the past four years or to organise spinning in the manner it has been. Fourthly, it is contrary to experience to say that any vocation is exclusively reserved for one sex only. Cooking is predominantly the occupation of women. But a soldier would be worthless who cannot cook his own food. The whole of the cooking in camps is necessarily and naturally done by men. Moreover, whilst women naturally cook for the household, organised cooking on a large scale is universally done by men throughout the world. Fighting is predominantly men's occupation, but Arab women fought like heroines side by side with their husbands in the early struggles of Islam. Rani of Jhansi distinguished herself for her bravery as very few men did during the Sepoy Revolt. And to-day in Europe we find women shining as lawyers, doctors and administrators. The clerical profession is being almost monopolised by women short-hand writers and typists. Why is spinning not a manly occupation? Why is anything that will bring about the economic and spiritual uplift of India (and spinning will according to the Professor) not manly enough for men?

Does not the professor know that it was a man who invented the spinning jenny? Had he not invented it the history of mankind would have been written differently. Needle-work is essentially women's work. But the master tailors of the world are men. And it was a man who invented the sewing machine. Had Singer deposed the needle, he would not have left his legacy to mankind. Had men taken care of spinning side by side with the women of India in days gone by, we would perhaps have never given up spinning as we did under pressure from the East India Company. The politician may devote himself to pure politics as much as he likes, but if we are to clothe ourselves by the joint effort of millions, the politician, the poet, the potentate, the pandit and the pauper, male or female, Hindu or Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew, will have religiously to give half an hour to spinning for the sake of the country. Religion of humanity is not the exclusive prerogative of any sex or class. It is the prerogative, nay the duty, of all. The religion of Indian humanity demands half an hour's spinning at least from every one who calls himself or herself Indian.

*11th June 1925*

### SPINNING IN SCHOOLS

The brilliant success that has attended the introduction of spinning in the Allahabad Municipal schools has been adverted to in the columns of *Young India* already. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru now reports :

“The Municipal Boards of Lucknow, Farrukhabad Benares, Cawnpore and Mirzapur, and the District Board of Jhansi, Banda, Basti and Azambag have introduced or are introducing spinning in their schools. It appears that many other local boards in U. P. are considering the

matter and are communicating with the U. P., P. C. C. in regard to it."

I venture to congratulate these municipalities on their laudable resolve. A serious obstacle in the way of introducing spinning in its schools that was complained of by the municipal education department of Allahabad, in its report was the frequency with which the wheels go out of order and want of space. With careful handling, no spinning wheel need go out of repair. But the complaint about space is a serious handicap in all cities. I commend to the attention of the school authorities the beautiful *takli*. It is carried in one's pocket. All the children can work it simultaneously. It never goes out of order and takes no space. It can be used anywhere and everywhere. In the Allahabad municipal schools, for instance, there were only 334 wheels for 3,4000 boys and girls to work at but of these one half remained idle for want of repair. I am sure that the wheels did not give more than 150 yards per boy or girl per 45 minutes. That means 47,250 yards daily at the most. A *takli* will not yield more than 30 yards in the same time. But all the 3,400 can work at the same time. Therefore, one would get, through the use of the *takli*, 10,200 yards per day, *i. e.* more than double the quantity yielded by the wheels. The *takli*, therefore, is the best spinning instrument in the long run for schools and such groups. The *takli* takes no more time to master than the wheel. I, therefore, recommend the immediate adoption of the *takli* in the Allahabad municipal schools. They may retain the Charkha for individual boys who may want to give extra time to them and are anxious to turn out large quantities of yarn.

M. K. G.

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18th June, 1925

### SPINNING IN DARJEELING

But for the presence of Deshbandhu Das in Darjeeling, I hardly think I would have gone there though the sight of the



snowy range was a temptation. I had thought that, for me to deliver the message of the Charkha to the fashionable people of Darjeeling would be simple folly. My fear was wholly unjustified. I was privileged to address a meeting of ladies who listened to the message of the wheel with sympathy. Mrs. Blair, the late W. C. Bonnerjee's daughter, was to start a spinning class for the fashionable ladies. I was privileged too, to deliver my message to a small meeting of missionaries. Of this, however, perhaps more later. Nor did I know that I should have the good fortune to see so many Nepali, Bhutia and other people. They evinced the greatest interest in the message. But my keenest joy was to see Shrimati Basanti Devi Das learning spinning and taking a vow religiously to spin every day for at least half an hour except in case of illness. Her daughter knew it already. But she had neglected it. She has now returned to it and added spinning by the *takli* which she picked in 10 minutes. Shrimati Urmila Devi and her children have been spinning regularly for some time now. And Deshbandhu himself took lessons on the *takli*. But he finds spinning harder than giving defeats to the Government or winning cases for clients. 'My husband can hardly turn the key of his box right; I have always to help him' pleaded Basanti Devi on behalf of her husband. 'You can, therefore, understand why it is so difficult for him to learn spinning.' But Deshbandhu has assured me that he is going to insist on learning spinning. He had lessons in spinning at the wheel in Patna. They were interrupted by his illness. He told me that he thoroughly believed in the Charkha and wanted to help it in every way possible. It was a perfect pleasure to see the whole household of the Mayor of Calcutta plying the Charkha in fashionable Darjeeling and creating a Charkhaatmosphere there. Needless to say, they were all dressed in Khaddar. For Deshbandhu Khaddar is not ceremonial wear. It is habitual with him. He tells me it would be difficult for him to revert to the foreign or mill-made cloth even if he wished it.

M. K. G.

*30th July, 1925*

### ALL INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

When the Congress has become a predominantly political body and if it is still in some form to represent the masses there must be a spinners' association all over India which will regulate and develop the spinning part of the franchise, which will take charge of all yarn that spinning members may give and will concentrate itself solely upon hand-spinning and Khaddar.

This association, if it comes into being, must be a purely business concern, it must be a permanent body not in any shape or form fluctuating with the fluctuations in the Congress politics. It must, therefore, have a fairly permanent executive. It must organise a Khaddar Service. It will, therefore, represent and develop village organisation by taking the message of the spinning wheel to the most distant villages and for the first time distributing wealth among the villagers instead of draining it away from them. It will be a peaceful penetration into the villages and an outflowing, after a time, of real national life from them. It ought to be the mightiest co-operative effort the world has yet seen. Given a fair amount of talent, only a fair amount of sacrifice, average honesty and support from the monied and middle classes, its success is assured. Let us see what the future has in store for India.

M. K. G.

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*6th August, 1925*

### SNARES OF SATAN

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following extract from a letter of a passionate lover of Khaddar will be read with interest :

"I believe in Khaddar. I see the mission of Khaddar clear crystal. It simplifies and hence purifies life. It

binds us to the poor by the tie of service. It is the only insurance against poverty which is killing the body and the soul of the nation, for at least as far as the illiterate millions are concerned there is no question of the soul without the body. Realised Yoga and its votaries might talk of it, but for the millions soul is mockery without body. Last and not least, Charkha is the only insurance against violent social outbreaks as are now flooding Europe with blood and passions. Charkha brings the masses and the classes together and as long as India accepts it Bolshevism and kindred violent eruptions would be impossible. These things convince me of the vital need of the Charkha. But there is only one difficulty. Can it work? Can it succeed? Can we now plant again the Charkha in its old place of sanctity in every home? Is it not too late? Before you went to prison I never would have questioned thus. There was room for hope. But now it is not all hope. And there is Bertrand Russel who says that industrialism is like a force of nature and India too will be submerged whether we want it or no. Only, such people say we should find our own solution for industrialism. There is the truth in what they say. Industrialism is flooding all the world and after the flood they are finding their own solutions. Take Europe. I do not believe that Europe will perish. I have too much faith in human nature and human nature will find the remedy sooner or later. Can India, even if she wants to, isolate herself and get out of the clutches of industrialism?

The argument to which this lover of Khaddar has been involuntarily and irresistibly drawn is Satan's old device. He always goes with us half-way, and then suddenly insinuates that it is no good going further and points to the seeming impossibility of further progress. He applauds virtue, but immediately says that it is not given to man to attain it.

Now, the difficulty that has occurred to the friend is a difficulty that faces a reformer at every step. Have not untruth

and hypocrisy permeated society? Yet those who believe in the ultimate triumph of truth, persist in it in the absolute hope of success. A reformer never permits time to run against him, for he defies that ancient enemy. Of course, industrialism is like a force of Nature, but it is given to man to control Nature and to conquer her forces. His dignity demands from him resolution in the face of overwhelming odds. Our daily life is such a conquest. An agriculturist knows it only too well.

What is industrialism but a control of the majority by a small minority? There is nothing attractive about it, nor is there anything inevitable in it. If the majority simply wills to say 'no' to the blandishments of the minority, the latter is powerless for mischief.

It is good to have faith in human nature. I live because I have that faith. But that faith does not blind me to the fact of history that, whilst in the ultimate all is well, individuals and groups called nations have before now perished. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Egypt and many others are a standing testimony in proof of the fact that nations have perished before now because of their misdeeds. What may be hoped for is that Europe on account of her fine and scientific intellect will realise the obvious and retrace her steps, and from the demoralizing industrialism she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganisation in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force.

Lastly, we must not be entrapped by false analogies. European writers are handicapped for want of experience and accurate information. They cannot guide us beyond a certain measure if they have to generalise from European examples which cannot be on all fours with Indian conditions, because in Europe they have nothing like the conditions of India, not even excluding Russia. What may be therefore true of Europe is not necessarily true of India. We know, too, that each nation has its own characteristics and individuality. India has her own; and if we

are to find out a true solution for her many ills, we shall have to take all the idiosyncrasies of her constitution into account, and then prescribe a remedy. I claim that to industrialise India in the same sense as Europe is to attempt the impossible. India has stood many a storm. Each has left its own indelible mark it is true, but she has hitherto dauntlessly maintained her individuality. India is one of the few nations of the earth which have witnessed that fall of many civilisation, herself remaining scatheless. India is one of the few nations on the earth which have retained some of their ancient institutions although they have been overlaid with superstition and error. But she has hitherto shown an inherent capacity for purging herself of error and superstition. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problem that faces her millions has never been so bright as it is to-day, especially after my study of the conditions in Bengal.

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*27th August, 1925*

## HOOKWORM AND CHARKHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

In the letter enclosing the cutting about cattle, dealt with elsewhere, in this issue, Mr. Andrews writes:

"I have just had with me here Dr. Tendrich of the Rockefeller International Health Board who has been plodding away in Madras. He tells me that on examination 92 to 85 p. c. of the peasantry have hook-worm, and other infections from night-soil like Typhoid and Dysentery, which are rife owing to evacuations getting everywhere mixed up with the water supply. He says that they were just in the same condition as the Negroes in the Southern States twenty years ago. The consequence also was the same,—no vitality, a wretched life of weakness. Now in the very same States today there is prosperity and vitality, because hook-worm, typhoid etc. have been con-

quered by the night-soil being got under control. He said to me that if a change were made in the peoples' habits in this direction by the very simple method of a village drainage, which would be filled in every six months, and then every six months afterwards dug out and used as a perfectly safe fertilizer as they do mostly in China, Japan and the States, the economic gain is so great as to be quite incalculable. My point is that the Charkha has opened the village problem, but it has not solved it. And if you say that it alone will solve it, by concentrating on it alone, that is too narrow. The cattle problem and the sanitation problem is equally vital."

In this paragraph Mr. Andrews has raised the question of sanitation. I am not blind to the necessity of sanitation, I became a sanitary reformer long before I discovered the Charkha. I was myself carrying on at the farm in Phoenix, Natal, experiments in burying night-soil and converting it into rich manure. We had there no scavenger; we were our own scavengers, and as Mr. Andrews himself knows one could walk about the settlement in Phoenix bare-footed without the danger of treading upon any dirt. The same treatment of night-soil is being continued at the Satyagraha Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati. But I do not carry on any propaganda about it, for the simple reason that it cannot solve the problem of the daily growing poverty immediately and directly. Moreover, in dealing with this question of insanitation, one has to fight against old prejudices and old habits. It is a matter of sustained education and one that cannot be dealt with without State aid. I regret to have to confess that ingrained bad habits handed down from generation to generation do not yield to persuasion. Legislation seems to me to be the only effective remedy.

But the same objection does not apply to the Charkha. On the contrary, it is to be the precursor of every reform, and if I can only concentrate the attention of the nation upon the Charkha, it will automatically solve all the other problems and

pave the way for legislation where legislation is required. The Charkha is calculated to make an immediate return, be it ever too small, to the individual. It presents the least difficulty in its working. There is no rooted prejudice against it. For the simple folk at least it requires no elaborate reasoning. It needs the smallest capital. It is the only constructive effort that is possible on a national scale. It is fraught with tremendous political consequences if it becomes successful, and seeing that it cannot succeed without co-operation, it makes for a mighty co-operative effort. Hence the claim that concentration on Charkha alone leads to Swaraj, and if this is too strong a proposition, let it be put in another way—'without the Charkha and all it implies there is no Swaraj, and therefore a wise economist will concentrate his attention upon the Charkha alone knowing that the rest will follow.'

Let me diagonalise the disease a little deeper. It is not the drain that matters so much as poverty, and it is not even poverty that matters so much as idleness which was at first enforced, and has now become a habit that matters. The drain may be stopped and poverty is merely a symptom, but idleness is the great cause, the root of all evil, and if that root can be destroyed most of the evils can be remedied without further effort. A nation that is starving has little hope or initiative left in it. It becomes indifferent to filth and disease. It says of all reforms 'to what good?' That winter of despair can only be turned into the 'sun-shine of hope' for the millions only through the life-giving wheel, the Charkha.

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*3rd September, 1925*

## SPINNING AT A GOVERNMENT INSTITUTE

BY M. K. GANDHI

There is at Serampore a weaving institute run by the Government of Bengal, through its department of Industries, where hand-spinning is being systematically taught. I was

curious to know its progress and the methods of instruction. I, therefore, applied for permission to visit the institute which was readily granted. Mr. Hoogwerf showed me round. There was hand-weaving, dyeing, and spinning not restricted to cotton only, but extended to jute, silk, etc.

I propose, however, to confine my attention to cotton-spinning only. I appreciated the anxiety of the staff about it but I discovered at once that there was not that technical ability and guidance which one would expect in a teaching institution. I had gone there to find a spinning expert with faith in hand-spinning. I had expected to find also up to date spinning wheels. I say this not by way of idle criticism, but in the hope of definite improvement taking place in the near future. Some of the spinning wheels I saw there were indifferently made and open to the same objections which I have raised in these columns to many specimens I saw during my tour. Some of them even created a jarring sound. The slivers were also not of the best. Under the circumstances I should not at all wonder, if in a short time one finds a report to the effect that the experiment in hand-spinning was a failure. Any experiment, before it can be pronounced a failure, must be given the fairest chance. It must, therefore, be conducted by one who has faith in it, and the requisite ability. There is, I understand, a desire to introduce instruction in power-loom weaving also at the Institute. As it is, the Institute is living on starvation wages. It is intended to promote cottage industries. In my opinion, the introduction of the power-loom will be a waste of public money, and I say this, not because of my disbelief in power-looms, but because it does not promote the object for which the Institute has been founded. Every rupee voted for its management must be devoted to the development of Cottage industries, and therefore, all the activities of the Institute should be devoted to the exploration of possibilities of hand-spinning, and the antecedent processes and instruction therein.

One thing I noticed in the Institute which can be copied by all national institutions where hand-spinning is taught and de-



veloped. Mr. Hoogwerf took me to his home which contains testing instruments for testing the strength and the count of yarn, its evenness, the staple of cotton and the durability of cloth when it is woven. If some of these simple instruments are kept in national institutions and judiciously used, they will help spinners to make rapid progress and to check their spinning.

I must not omit an institution which is run chiefly from the aid of the Government Institute and is situated near by. It is really a home for girls to which a missionary lady has devoted herself. There too, hand-spinning is one of the things taught. But my criticism applies equally to this Home. The superintendent, in spite of all her will to make it a success, cannot do so until she herself learns the art, so as to enable her to know a good wheel from a bad and to know when spinning is done properly.

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*10th September, 1925*

### A VILLAGE EXPERIMENT

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following will be read with interest by every one concerned with village reconstruction :—

“ Kanur is a small village in a corner of Coimbatore district. It has been a centre of Khaddar work ever since the movement began. The pioneer work was done by Mr. Balaji Rao, a lawyer who had suspended his practice at the first call of non-co-operation. The work was taken over last year by the Tamil Nadu Khaddar Board under its direct control and management and the centre is now producing about Rs. 1000/ worth of Khadar per week on a capital of Rs. 3000. The production may still be increased but the present worker, Mr Gomez, a Christian Indian whose indefatigable energy has endeared him to all, would need one or more assistants.

“ But the interest of Kanur lies not in the growth of com-

mercial production but in the progress that self-spinning and Khaddar-wearing have made in the village. The good work of three years and more carried on at first by Mr. Balaji Rao and his agent and then in succession by Congress workers, Sjts. Elayalwar and Gomez, has borne excellent results in that it has introduced and fostered the habit of self-spinning in most of the Naicker's families, who form the most influential community in the village. The example set by them has caught on even among other castes and a few of the Gounders also have begun clothing themselves out of their own yarn. The richer and middle class homes having considerable leisure to spin have employed themselves in self-spinning. The present Charkha and cloth position may be represented as follows :

Charkhas working for own use	34
"          "          " wages	7
Charkhas idle	32
Number of handgins in use	10
"          "          " idle	14
Number of looms on Khaddar	4
"          "          " on mill yarn	nil.

1. Seed cotton stocked in the self-spinners' homes. 56¼ mds.

(25 Naickers, 6 Gounders and 1 Brahmin family will give 392 lbs of ginned cotton)

2. Turned into yarn (as on the 19th June) 180¼ lbs

3. Stock of slivers and yarn in private house 89½ lbs

4. Cloth already made in sq. yards 450½ yards

5. Estimated outturn of cloth at the self-spinners' homes 1486 yards.

6. Clothing needs of the village, in sq. yds. 7500 yds.  
i. e. Rs. 3640.

"Thus nearly 20% of the clothing needs of the village will be met from out of the product of its own labour. Each one of the self-spinning homes stocks cotton during the season and finishes its spinning inside of two or three months. The Charkhas working for wages serve to supplement the self-spinners

outturn and do not feed any producing centre run commercially. The cotton stocked in the homes is Karunganni which is raised by almost every farmer in the village.

"Spinning occupies, during the cotton season, and for some time after, all the leisure hours of the women at home. It will be seen from the figures given above that less than forty Charkhas working only three or at best four months in the year and that only during spare moments are able to supply nearly a fifth of the total clothing requirements of the village. Eight Charkhas that worked last year had stopped this year mainly owing to the failure to obtain sufficient cotton. If only the 32 Charkhas found idle had also been set in motion the village would have almost had half its clothing and even more during this year. The lack of dyeing facilities has so far prevented the use of home-spun yarn for the *Saree*, but provision is being made for them by the Tamil Nadu Board. A young man trained in indigenous dyes has been induced to settle in the village and the Tamil Nadu Board is providing him with some kind of permanent work. This will enable the local people also to have access to the necessary dyeing facilities.

"The economies in self-spinning arise in more than one way and they can best be illustrated by taking a typical cloth budget and examining it in respect of costs and the needs of the home. One of the families which leads the village in every respect with an annual income of over Rs. 6000 gives the following figures in regard to its cloth budget as it is now and as it was three years ago :

In 1925 (Khaddar) In 1931 Mill and foreign cloth.

*For the men*

12 pairs of Dhotees and upper cloths	72 yds.	12 pairs dhotees and upper cloths	72 yds.
Shirting 3 pieces	30 yds.	Shirting	50 yds.
Coating (only one uses a coat now)	4 yds.	Coating	10 yds.
Deepawali extras (Practically nil)		Extras	

*For the women*

2 Khaddar sarees 16 yds. 12 sarees of 96 yds.  
 10 Mill and foreign yarn  
 sarees 80 yds. Rs. 120 3 other sarees 24 yds.  
 For jackets etc. Rs. 10 For jackets etc. 10 yds.

*The children's wear*

12 yds. for wear and For children's wear 20 yds.  
 8 yds. extra

*For servants and the boy*

4 dhotees and 3 towels  
 20 yds. 4 dhotees and towels

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252 yds, Rs. 225

---

302 yds, Rs. 192

"Barring the mill sarees and some 60 yds. or so of Khaddar that may have to be purchased, all the rest will be met from out of the yarn spun by the family. The total expense on cloth, thus calculated including price of cotton and that of the mill sarees comes to about Rs. 225 or a distinct saving of Rs. 250 or more to the family on its cloth budget. The economies here arise mostly out of the new simplicity in living which Khaddar brought in its wake. *Shorter lengths* for dhotees in Khaddar and the rejection of costly sarees make for real economy. The exclusion of wasteful luxury is in itself no small gain. But a much bigger gain than that is the increasing amount of labour at home and the filling in of idle hours. Apart from the saving in cost and the advantage of durability which hand-spun has on mill or foreign cloth, the most striking thing is the utilisation of spare hours for productive and useful work. In the case of poor families even the money saved is greatly helpful. In one instance, on 29 sq. yds. of cloth already made, there has been a saving of more than Rs. 6. If all the 125 yards of cloth needed by this particular family for a year are also met out of their self-spun yarn, there will be a saving of about Rs. 30 or so. somewhere about 20 days' income to the family.

"The cloth budget for the entire village is roughly estimated at Rs. 3640 or 7525 sq. yds. of cloth. Khaddar is not

only popular, it has come to stay. Foreign and mill cloth is fast disappearing from the village. Dupattas and shawls were the first to be made of Khaddar, Khaddar dhotees, upper cloths and shirting came on latter. The Khaddar saree is just making its appearance. How striking has been the advance made in the direction of Khaddar weaving to the exclusion of all foreign and mill-made stuff will be evident from the following figures :

1. Total population Kanoor	645 .
2. Adult population excluding children	475
3. Number of Khaddar wearers	92
4. Percentage of 3 to 2	20%

"The number of Khaddar wearers given above takes into account only those who wear Khaddar to the exclusion of everything else and do not even possess a shred of foreign or mill clothing. Practically every one of the men in Kanoor has some Khaddar on him.

"There are four families of weavers in the village with 4 looms. All work on Khaddar. They all use small length warps of 10 to 12 yards, a facility which to self-spinners is a great advantage. The wages paid for weaving cloth for spinners in local families are slightly higher than the standardised Congress wage; for the self-spinners usually give thinner yarn and prefer to pay something extra to the weaver. Sometimes the wage is given in kind and not in money.

"The example of Kanoor has had its effects on the adjacent village of Pudur. Although neither Khaddar wearing nor self-spinning can be said to have made much headway here, a good beginning is already there. About 5% of the population are entire Khaddar wearers. As for self-spinning, so far only ten families have taken to it here. The general Charkha and loom position is as follows :

Charkhas working for own use	12
" " " wage	4
Number of looms on Khaddar	17
" " " mill yarn	nil

Seed cotton stocked in spinners' homes	508	lbs
Yarn spun already	115½	lbs
Cloth made on June 19th	302	yards
Estimated yield of cloth from cotton stocked for spinning	508 yards or 1/16th	part of clothing needed by the village.

"The results obtained in self-spinning homes in the village are identical with those obtained at Kanoor. The families that have taken to it, although still few, are very keen and enthusiastic about it and are anxious to spread it among their relatives and kinsmen."

This is in many respects a remarkable experiment. Quiet work has gone on without fuss, without advertisement, and practically without capital and this has been possible because the people were willing to revise their taste in dress material and to make use of their idle hours. The population of the village is 640. The cloth budget is estimated at Rs. 3640. Therefore when all the villagers are clothed in Khaddar they will add to their annual income Rs. 3640 by simply using their waste moments. There is no village reconstruction scheme which can possibly yield such brilliant tangible and quick results. This Khaddar work is also an object lesson in co-operation. And by the time Khaddar becomes a permanent part of the village life, selfless village workers can, if they will, promote sanitation, education and social reform. This is practical self-government. Imagine thousands of such villages bound together by a common tie through Khaddar, and you have Swaraj for the asking. For when India learns to deny itself the use of foreign cloth, she will have sterilised the many undesirable activities of the British people and paved the way for real Swaraj. I hope that the good people of Kanoor will not rest content till every man, woman and child living in it habitually wears Khaddar. It is to be hoped too that the infection will not be confined to Pudur only, but that it will spread from village to village.

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1st October, 1925

## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ALL INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION.

Whereas the time has arrived for the establishment of an expert organisation for the development of handspinning and khaddar, and whereas experience has shown that such development is not possible without a permanent organisation, unaffected and uncontrolled by politics, political changes or political bodies, an organisation called the All India Spinners' Association is hereby established with the consent of the All India Congress Committee, as an integral part of the Congress organisation, but with independent existence and powers.

The said Association shall consist of members and associates and donors herein-after defined and shall have an Executive Council consisting of the following persons who shall hold office for five years :—

- |                                    |                |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mahatma Gandhi.                 |                |
| 2. Maulana Shaukat Ali.            |                |
| 3. Syt. Rajendra Prasad.           |                |
| 4. Syt. Satish Chandra Das Gupta.  |                |
| 5. Syt. Maganlal K. Gandhi.        |                |
| 6. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Treasurer. |                |
| 7. Mr. Shuaib Qureshi.             | } Secretaries. |
| 8. Syt. Shankerlal G. Banker.      |                |
| 9. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru.       |                |

### *Powers of the Council.*

The Council shall take over all the funds and assets belonging to the All India Khadi Board and all Provincial Khadi Boards with full powers to administer these and other funds and shall discharge their existing financial obligations.

The Council shall have the right to raise loans, to collect subscriptions, to hold immovable property, to invest funds under proper security, to give and take mortgages for the

furtherance of handspinning and Khaddar, to give financial assistance to khaddar organisations by way of loans, gifts or bounties, to help or establish schools or institutions where handspinning is taught, to help or open Khadi stores to establish a Khaddar Service, to act as agency on behalf of the Congress to receive self-spun yarn as subscription to the Congress and to issue certificates, and to do all the things that may be considered necessary for the furtherance of its objects, with power to make regulations for the conduct of affairs of the Association or the Council and to amend them, as also the present constitution, as may be considered necessary from time to time.

Vacancies in the existing Council by death, resignation or otherwise shall be filled by the remaining members.

The Council shall have the right to add to its numbers which shall not exceed 12 at any time and four members shall form the quorum for a meeting of the Council.

All decisions shall be taken by majority of votes.

The Council shall keep an accurate account of all subscriptions, donations and fees, whether in cash or kind, and of expenditure. The books shall be open to public inspection and shall be audited by competent auditors every three months.

The central office of the Association shall be at the Satyagrahashram, Sabarmati, and those who are desirous of becoming spinning members of the Congress shall send their yarn subscriptions to the central office with particulars in the following form :—

To

The Secretary,

All India Spinners' Association,

Sabarmati.

SIR,

I enclose herewith-----yards of yarn-----  
in weight spun by me being my subscription to the National Congress. I am or wish to become a member of the-----



Congress Committee. My age is———My occupation is  
———. My address is———

Yours faithfully,

(Signature in legible hand, and if a  
woman state whether married  
or unmarried.)

Upon receipt of the subscription the Secretary shall examine the quantity and quality of yarn and if found satisfactory shall send to the Congress Committee concerned a certificate in the following form:—

"This is to certify that———has  
sent to the A. I. S. A.———yards of yarn  
being subscription for membership to the Congress for the  
year———in———, Congress  
Committee of———P. C. C."

A duplicate of the certificate with signature of the Secretary shall be sent to the sender of the yarn.

The central office shall keep a separate ledger containing a list with full particulars of all yarn received by the A. I. S. A. for membership of the Congress.

### *Members*

There shall be two classes of members of the Association, A and B:—

- (i) The A class shall consist of persons above eighteen years of age and habitually wearing Khadi, who deposit regularly from month to month with the treasurer or any agency duly appointed thereto by the Council 1000 yards of self-spun yarn well-twisted and uniform.
- (ii) The B class shall consist of persons above eighteen years of age habitually wearing Khadi who pay an annual subscription of 2000 yards of self-spun yarn well-twisted and uniform.

Any yarn paid to the Association for membership of the

\* State address.

National Congress shall be considered part of the subscription to the Association.

*Rights and Duties of Members*

The duty of every member, both A and B classes, shall be to carry on a propaganda for handspinning and Khadi.

The members shall have the right to elect from among members of the A class the Executive Council after the expiry by efflux of time of the present Council. The member present at a meeting duly convened may by a three-fourths majority change the constitution of the Association after expiry of five years from the date hereof.

When in any province fifty members have been enrolled they may elect from among the members of class A, an advisory committee of five to advise the Council about provincial matters relating to the objects of the Association.

*Associate*

Those who pay the All India Spinners' Association Rs. 12 per year in advance and habitually wear Khaddar shall be considered Associate Members of the Association.

Any person who wears Khaddar habitually and pays in advance a consolidated amount of Rs. 500 shall become a Life Associate of the Association.

All Associates will be entitled to receive free of charge copies of statements, balance sheets, and minutes of proceedings of the Council.

Every person wishing to join the Association shall apply in the following form :—

To

The Secretary,

All India Spinner's Association.

Sabarmati.

Dear Sir,

I have read the rules of the A. I. S. A. I desire to become a member of class ——— and I forward herewith an associate member my subscription for ———— Please enrol me as a member.

Yours faithfully,

*To Voluntary Spinners*

The Secretaries ask me to draw the attention of voluntary spinners to the following :

Every person wishing to join the Association shall apply in the following form :—

To

The Secretary,

All India Spinner's Association,

Sabarmati.

Dear Sir,

I have read the rules of the A. I. S. A. I desire to become a member of class... and I forward herewith  
an associate member  
 my subscription for...  
 Please enrol me as a member.

Yours faithfully;

2. The yarn must be sent direct to Sabarmati.
3. A slip containing the following particulars of information should be attached to the yarn :—
  - i. Name and address of the member, denoting Congress province and Taluqa.
  - ii. Month of Subscription.
  - iii. (a) Length of yarn.  
 (b) Weight of yarn.  
 (c) Count of yarn.  
 (d) Size of hank.  
 (e) Kind of cotton used.

Those two hundred who gave their names at the inauguration meeting of the Association please note.

M. K. G.

*1st October, 1935*

## ALL INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

The reader will see printed elsewhere the constitution of the All India Spinners' Association. A careful study of it will show that it is at the present moment not only not a democratic institution but that in effect, it is a one man's show. It may represent either the arrogance of the person who calls into being such an institution or his absolute faith in the cause and in himself. So far as a man can be aware of himself, I know that there is no arrogance in giving an autocratic character to the association. Commercial bodies can never be democratic. And if hand-spinning is to become universal and successful in the country its non-political and purely economical side must be now fully developed. That development is sought to be attained by the All India Spinners' Association.

In choosing my colleagues in the Association I have been guided by the sole consideration of utility. Each one has been selected for his special qualification. In making the selection there was no question of representation of different provinces. And some of the best workers have been left out of the Council because of the possibility of misunderstandings. What special qualification from the spinners' standpoint has Maulana Shaukat Ali, it may be asked. The special qualification that he has is that he is a Mussalman, a *pucca* believer in Khadi, wants to spin one thousand yards every month and to do all he can for the Charkha and Khaddar. I have purposely omitted active Swarajists because for obvious reasons, they cannot give their time predominantly to Khaddar.

At the time of the formation of the Association at which I was assisted by over one hundred Khaddar lovers, including Swarajists, I was asked whether I had ceased to believe in the political importance of Khadi or of its ability to produce an atmosphere for Civil Resistance. My answer was an emphatic

'no.' The political importance of Khaddar consists in its economic capacity. A people that are starving for want of occupation can have no political consciousness. Khaddar will have no political importance in a country where no cloth is needed and where people live on hunting, or in a country where people live on the exploitation of peoples belonging to other countries. The political importance of Khaddar in India is derived from her peculiar condition in that it needs cloth, it exploits no other country, and its millions have nothing to do for four months in the year, though they are starving. The ability of Khaddar to give an atmosphere of Civil Resistance consists in its ability, if successful, of making us conscious of some power within us and its ability to produce an atmosphere of calmness, and yet fixed determination behind that calmness. Many people who have Civil Resistance on their lips have still little notion of what it means. They mix it up with an atmosphere of intense excitement, ready at any moment to develop into actual violence, whereas Civil Resistance is the very opposite of it. And neither the political result nor the calm atmosphere are possible without Khadi becoming an economic success. Hence is it necessary to emphasise its paramount and economic aspect which is also its direct result. The preamble, therefore, is deliberate and vital. The fiercest politician and the fiercest Civil Resister may join the Association, but he does so as an economic worker. No Maharaja need shun the Association if he admits the great economic value of Khadi and the paramount necessity of finding a supplementary employment for the starving millions of India. I, therefore, venture to invite all those who believe in Khadi and the spinning wheel to join the Association irrespective of their politics and irrespective of race or creed. I would invite Englishmen and other Europeans who are mindful of the welfare of the starving millions of India to join the Association. I know that there are many who believe in Khadi, who believe in hand-spinning, but will not spin themselves. Let them become Associates, if they will wear Khadi. There are yet others who for some reason or other will not even wear Khadi and yet want

Khadi to make all the progress it can. Let them support the Association with their donations.

Let there be, however, no mistake that so long as it pleases the Congress to allow it, the Association will remain an integral part of the Congress organisation. As such it will be its duty to render all the assistance it can to the Congress in its programme of hand-spinning and Khadi. The connecting link between the Congress and the Association is thus a common faith in the spinning-wheel and Khadi. The Association as such will not concern itself or be in any way affected by the varying politics of the Congress. Its existence will be independent, its object merely confined to the propagation of the spinning wheel and Khadi, and it will be governed by its own separate constitution, so much so that it has adopted a different franchise and it can take in, as I have already said, non-Congress men as members and no Congressman; not even a spinning member, is bound to become a member of the Association.

The constitution is not as rigid as I had at first intended. The drafts circulated by me required two thousand yards of yarn per month for membership of A class; and a declaration to the following effect was intended to be required from such members :

"It is my firm belief that the economic salvation of the masses of India is impossible without the universal adoption by the country of the spinning wheel and its product Khaddar. I shall, therefore, except when disabled by illness or some unforeseen event, spin daily, for at least half an hour and habitually wear hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar, and in the event of my belief undergoing a change, or my ceasing to spin or wear Khaddar, I shall resign the membership of this Association."

The two thousand yards were reduced to one thousand because a strenuous fight was put up on behalf of those who wanted to become A class members and yet found it difficult to give 2,000 yards per month. The declaration itself was dropped because the very idea of a solemn undertaking seemed to be

repugnant, I still think quite wrongly, to others. My own opinion and that of many others is that promises or vows are necessary for the strongest of us. A promise is like a right angle not nearly but exactly  $90^{\circ}$ . The slightest deflection makes it useless for the grand purpose that the right angle serves. A voluntary promise is like a plumb line keeping a man straight and warning him when he is going wrong. Rules of general application do not serve the same purpose as an individual vow. We find therefore the system of declarations followed in all large and well conducted institutions. The Viceroy has to take the oath of office. Members of Legislatures have to do likewise all the world over, and in my opinion rightly so. A soldier joining an army has to do likewise. Moreover a written undertaking reminds one of what one has promised to do. Memory is a very frail thing. The written word stands for ever. But as there was fairly strong opposition to the retention of declarations, I felt that I should waive them as it was common ground among all that whilst the declaration might not be taken as a matter of fact, the belief affirmed in the declaration was and should be the belief of every member and that every member was expected to spin at least for half an hour daily except when unavoidably prevented from doing so. There was an additional clause to the declaration to be made by members of the Council, and it was this :—

“I promise faithfully to discharge the obligations of my office as member of the Council of the Association and give preference to the furtherance of its objects over all other work, public or private, that I might undertake.”

It was suggested that whilst the declaration should not be taken, the promise of faithful discharge of obligations of office must be an understood thing in an Association whose Council was necessarily to consist of whole-timers. Indeed, the holding of office in the Council is all duty and no right. And where it is all service and no certificate save that of one's own conscience, all can take part in it whether they hold office or not. I hope therefore that no omission will be resented or misunder-

stood. On the contrary I am hoping that all the Khadi workers, who had any new or important idea, or special talent for serving, will not fail to give the Association the benefit of his or her idea or talent. If its activity is to succeed, it will need all the assistance that the lowliest among us can give.

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*8th October, 1925*

### DEBTS OF HONOUR

I had sometime ago in the pages of Navajivan to refer to the default on the part of Congress debtors in Gujarat. Now that I have taken up the burden of the All-India Spinners' Association, the first present I received was a list from Mr. Banker of 70 debtors to the Bihar Provincial Khadi Board. These are all debts of long-standing incurred by Congressmen, —many of them are for Khaddar sold. They amount to over Rs. 20,000. It is a matter of shame and sorrow that there should be so many debts outstanding. The Khadi Board has in my opinion been over-lenient. All public institutions are public trust and those who are in charge of them have often-times to harden their hearts and rigorously collect all debts owing to the trust and their charge. Leniency in the management of public trust is a misplaced virtue and may often amount to an unpardonable breach. I know that a false notion of non-co-operation has often come in the way of proceedings being taken against defaulters. But as I have so often pointed out laws are made by institutions for self-preservation not for suicide. When, therefore, they hamper their growth they are worse than useless, and must be set aside. Boycott of Law Courts was undertaken in order to invigorate the nation, to wean people from running on the slightest pretext to Law Courts, to popularize private arbitration, never to bolster up fraud or cover defaulters. It proceeded upon the assumption that Congressmen would at least carry out their obligations to one another and to the Congress without the necessity of resort



even to arbitration, much less to Law Courts. I hope therefore that those gentlemen who owe anything to the Khadi Board will hasten to discharge their debts and will not put the Board to the painful necessity of taking proceedings against them.

M. K. G.

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*15th October, 1925*

### SUBSIDIARY INDUSTRY PAR EXCELLENCE

A friend sends me the following from the Keatinge's "Agricultural Progress in Western India":

"Attempts have been made to get cultivators to take up unskilled work such as cotton spinning by hand, but in view of the efficiency of spinning mills such operations can be justified economically on the assumption that the cultivator now wastes so much of his time that any work which he does, however badly paid, will be better than nothing. Unfortunately the existing facts in many cases justify such an assumption, but to condemn the cultivators to this uphill and uneven competition is a counsel of despair. The subsidiary industry par excellence of the cultivator should be breeding and rearing of live stock which provides an occupation and income at all seasons, and returns to the soil the manure which is necessary to maintain it in high fertility."

This question is valuable for its simple admissions, namely, that in many cases the cultivator in India has much time to waste and that any occupation during that time, however, badly paid, is better than nothing. The writer, however, discourages hand-spinning because of the efficiency of spinning mills. Upon a close examination the argument will be found to be fallacious. The cultivator has not to compete with efficient mills at his own door. The only thing he has to compete with is his new-fangled taste for starchy and flimsy mill-made cloth. If he would only revive his old taste and return to the simple

but soft and beautiful Khaddar, he is never in the danger of having an idle moment thrown upon him. The efficient hotels and bakeries offer no inducement or competition to the millions of people who prefer their cruelly made *Chapatis* to the geometrically rounded and well-baked and well-spiced biscuits. The subsidiary industry of cattle-breeding that has been suggested is no doubt good and any day more paying than spinning. But it requires capital and a knowledge of breeding which the ordinary cultivator does not possess and cannot and will not possess without much previous preparation. Turn it how you will therefore, for Indian conditions there is no other subsidiary industry that can compete with hand-spinning. Its inestimable value consists not in its capacity for paying a few individuals highly but in immediately providing a remunerative occupation for millions. It is the only subsidiary occupation, therefore, that is capable of being successfully organised. Hence not cattle-breeding, however good it is in itself, but hand-spinning is the subsidiary industry par excellence.

M. K. G.

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*22nd October, 1925*

BOYCOTTS v. CONSTRUCTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

An Andhra friend in his urgent invitation asking me to be present at the forthcoming Ganjam District Conference writes as follows :

"The best part of our Congress work in connection with the constructive programme was done in places round Hiramandalam. Majority of the people wear Khaddar. You are probably aware that Andhradesh is not in love with Councils-work. It belongs to no-change party. It never excuses you for dropping the Boycotts. Our hope lies in Constructive work. People are getting disheartened. Their enthusiasm is at a low ebb. Hiramandalam is a great Khaddar producing centre. The

Fiska Congress Committee manufactures several varieties of Khaddar and has one of the best shops in the district. It has also a National School. It is a Vaisya (Banias) centre. They are almost all Khaddarwalahs. But what good? Their enthusiasm for Swaraj is well-nigh extinguished. Without the Boycotts, people have no faith in constructive work. Our efforts to rekindle enthusiasm are unavailing. I have surrendered all my wordly prospects, been rendered utterly destitute and still at the work hoping against hope to achieve Swaraj."

I have informed him that it is impossible for me to be present at the Ganjam District Conference however much I should like to be able to do so. I am with great difficulty, and for me in slow stages, finishing the remaining and indispensable part of the tour programme for the year after which I hope to have rest from incessant travelling. I am, therefore, sorry to have to disappoint the Andhra friends. But I have reproduced the foregoing extract not for the purpose of advertising the necessity of rest for my tired limbs, but in order to remove the confusion of thought that has enabled the writer to attribute want of interest in constructive work to the suspension of boycotts by the Congress. In the first place, if Andhra Desh has no love for Council work the Congress does not compel it to manufacture love for Councils. It merely authorises those who believe in Council work to take it upon on behalf of and in the name of the Congress. It withdraws the prohibition from those who gave up such work not out of faith but merely out of loyalty to the Congress. It prohibits people from using the name of the Congress to condemn entry into the legislative bodies and lastly it encourages those who believe in such political work to prosecute it with zeal. But it does not in any way fetter a single Congressman's conscience. Those must have a poor faith in themselves whose zeal is damped for want of extraneous support. Moreover, the writer forgets that the Congress has not only not dropped boycott of foreign cloth, but it will bless and issue a certificate of merit to those who will achieve that boycott. I am striving my best to deserve that

certificate and I invite everybody to join me in the endeavour. That boycott can be achieved only when Khaddar becomes popular enough to be universal. Hence the inauguration of the All-India Spinners' Association. Every boycott has its constructive side. The Association will devote its best energy to the constructive effort. What have the other boycotts—for instance that of titles or schools or law-courts—to do with the manufacture and wearing of Khaddar? The beauty of these boycotts lies in their individuality and capacity to stand alone. The individual taking part in any or all of them always benefits, and when a sufficiently large number take part in them the nation becomes fit for Swaraj. Blind enthusiasm and blind faith can lead to no lasting good. It is, therefore, necessary to realise that the constructive programme by itself has an inestimable value even apart from its undoubted capacity to fit us for Swaraj.

The writer has done well in surrendering all his wordly prospects and in rendering himself utterly destitute. But let him consider that sacrifice to be its own reward. Thousands upon thousands will have to do likewise before Swaraj is attained by the nation. He who has sacrificed his all for Swaraj has certainly attained it for himself. There is no need, therefore, for such a one to 'hope against hope,' for if his sacrifice is voluntary and intelligent it is all hope without any disappointment. One's faith has got to be bright and intelligent before it can enkindle faith in others. Those therefore who believe in Khaddar and other parts of the programme of 1921 must be able to stand unmoved inspite of variations in the policy, politics and programme of the Congress.

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*22nd October, 1925*

## A DILEMMA

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend finds himself in a dilemma. He is serving in an Indian concern that requires his services from 8 a. m. to 9 p. m., I suppose with a break for dinner. But the employers do not prescribe the kind or the quality of the material of which his dress should be made. And by choice therefore he wears Khaddar. A foreign firm, however, offers him double the salary with fewer hours of service but will not have his dress made of Khaddar. Now the difficulty which faces him is this: If he accepts the foreign service he cannot only improve his material position but get enough time for spinning daily in which he believes but has to deny himself Khaddar-dress which he loves. If he remains where he is he has to slave for 12 hours, pinch himself and get no time for spinning. What is he to do? I have little hesitation in giving my opinion. Apart from the question of Khaddar, for a self-respecting man the foreigner's tempting offer is totally unacceptable for the simple reason that it is coupled with an undue restraint upon one's liberty, especially when that restraint is against national interest and from the facts stated is due to prejudice against Khaddar. On merits too, I would any day prefer liberty to wear Khaddar although for want of time spinning may have to be sacrificed for the time being. If all were obliged to discard Khaddar spinning will have no value. The virtue of spinning is not absolute but relative. If the product of spinning is not marketable it would be a cruel mockery to call upon millions of semi-starved men and women to spin. The need of the time is therefore popularisation of Khaddar wear. Spinning is undoubtedly necessary. But when there is a choice between spinning and wearing Khaddar naturally the latter has the undisputed preference. Spinning is required from those who want to add to their slender resources and that too during spare hours and without payments from those who have time to spare for giving even a

few moments' labour in that particular form to the nation. In the case in point the will to spin being there the time will certainly be found in due course. Probably the correspondent has to go by tram or train to his office. Let him take the *Takli* with him and give the odd moments to it. There are many within my knowledge who are thus utilising their odd moments. I therefore hope that the correspondent will never, for any temptation, give up his Khaddar wear. I had hope that the prejudice against Khaddar had died down in the foreign mercantile firms. The European merchants in Calcutta to whom I had the privilege of talking showed no prejudice against Khaddar wear. I wish that influential European merchants who may see this paragraph will exert their influence to remove the prejudice reported by my correspondent. And it is high time for Indian firms to remodel their businesses so as to curtail the inordinately long hours for which their employees are detained. The world's experience shows that long hours do not mean more but actually less work. It simply requires a little courage and a little initiative to make the much needed reform voluntarily and generously—a reform that is otherwise bound to come in any case. But then when it comes under pressure it will have lost all its grace. Shorter hours for employees is a world movement which nobody can stop. Will not the Indian Chamber of Commerce or some such mercantile Association lead the way?

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5th November, 1925

### THE POET AND THE CHARKHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

When Sir Rabindranath's criticism of the Charkha was published some time ago, several friends asked me to reply to it. Being heavily engaged I was unable then to study it in full. But I had read enough of it to know its trend. I was in no hurry to reply. Those who had read it were too much agitated

or influenced to be able to appreciate what I might have then written even if I had the time. Now therefore is really the time for me to write on it and to ensure a dispassionate view being taken of the Poet's criticism or my reply if such it may be called.

The criticism is a sharp rebuke to Acharya Ray for his impatience of the Poet's and Acharya Seal's position regarding the Charkha, and a gentle rebuke to me for my exclusive love of it. Let the public understand that the Poet does not deny its great economic value. Let them know that he signed the appeal for the All-India Deshabandhu Memorial after he had written his criticism. He signed the appeal after studying its contents carefully and even as he signed it he sent me the message that he had written something on the Charkha which might not quite please me. I knew therefore what was coming. But it has not displeased me. Why should mere disagreement with my views displease? If every disagreement were to displease, since no two men agree exactly on all points, life would be a bundle of unpleasant sensations and therefore a perfect nuisance. On the contrary the frank criticism pleases me. For our friendship becomes all the richer for our disagreements. Friends to be friends are not called upon to agree even on most points. Only disagreement must have no sharpness, much less bitterness, about them. And I gratefully admit that there is none about the Poet's criticism.

I am obliged to make these prefatory remarks as dame rumour has whispered that jealousy is the root of all that criticism. Such baseless suspicion betrays an atmosphere of weakness and intolerance. A little reflection must remove all ground for such a cruel charge. Of what should the Poet be jealous in me? Jealousy presupposes the possibility of rivalry. Well, I have never succeeded in writing a single rhyme in my life. There is nothing of the Poet about me. I cannot aspire after his greatness. He is the undisputed master of it. The world today does not possess his equal as a poet. My 'mahatma'—

ship has no relation to the poet's undisputed position. It is time to realise that our fields are absolutely different and at no point overlapping. The poet lives in a magnificent world of his own creation—his world of ideas. I am a slave of somebody else's creation—the spinning wheel. The Poet makes his *gopis* dance to the tune of his flute. I wander after my beloved Sita, the Charkha and seek to deliver her from the ten-headed monster from Japan, Manchester, Paris etc. The Poet is an inventor—he creates, destroys and recreates. I am an explorer and having discovered a thing I must cling to it. The Poet presents the world with new and attractive things from day to day. I can merely show the hidden possibilities of old and even worn out things. The world easily finds an honourable place for the magician who produces new and dazzling things. I have to struggle laboriously to find a corner for my worn out things. Thus there is no competition between us. But I may say in all humility that we complement each the other's activity.

The fact is that the Poet's criticism is a poetic license and he who takes it literally is in danger of finding himself in an awkward corner. An ancient poet has said that Solomon arrayed in all his glory was not like one of the lilies of the field. He clearly referred to the natural beauty and innocence of the lily contrasted with the artificiality of Solomon's glory and his sinfulness in spite of his many good deeds. Or take the poetical license in 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' We know that no camel has ever passed through the eye of a needle and we know too that rich men like Janaka have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Or take the beautiful simile of human teeth being likened to the pomegranate seed. Foolish women who have taken the poetical exaggeration literally have been found to disfigure and even harm their teeth. Painters and poets are obliged to exaggerate the proportions of their figures in order to give true perspective. Those therefore who take the Poet's denunciation of the Charkha literally will be doing an injustice to the Poet and an injury to themselves.



The poet does not, he is not expected, he has no need, to read *Young India*. All he knows about the movement is what he has picked up from table talk. He has therefore denounced what he has imagined to be the excesses of the Charkha cult.

He thinks for instance that I want everybody to spin the whole of his or her time to the exclusion of all other activity, that is to say that I want the poet to forsake his muse, the farmer his plough, the lawyer his brief and the doctor his lancet. So far is this from truth that I have asked no one to abandon his calling, but on the contrary to adorn it by giving every day only thirty minutes to spinning as sacrifice for the whole nation. I have indeed asked the famishing man or woman who is idle for want of any work whatsoever to spin for a living and the half-starved farmer to spin during his leisure hours to supplement his slender resources. If the Poet span half an hour daily his poetry would gain in richness. For it would then represent the poor man's wants and woes in a more forcible manner than now.

The Poet thinks that the Charkha is calculated to bring about a deathlike sameness in the nation and thus imagining he would shun it if he could. The truth is that the Charkha is intended to realise the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. Behind the magnificent and kaleidoscopic variety one discovers in nature a unity of purpose, design and form which is equally unmistakable. No two men are absolutely alike, not even twins, and yet there is much that is indispensably common to all mankind. And behind the commonness of form there is the same life pervading all. The idea of sameness or oneness was carried by Shāṅkara to its utmost logical and natural limit and he exclaimed that there was only one Truth, one God-Brahman and all form, *nam, rupa* was illusion or illusory, evanescent. We need not debate whether what we see is unreal; and whether the real behind the unreality is what we do not see. Let both be equally real, if you will. All I say is that there is a sameness, identity or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety. And so do I hold that behind a variety of occupations

there is an indispensable sameness also of occupation. Is not agriculture common to the vast majority of mankind? Even so was spinning common not long ago to a vast majority of mankind. Just as both prince and peasant must eat and clothe themselves so must both labour for supplying their primary wants. Prince may do so if only by way of symbol and sacrifice, but that much is indispensable for him if he will be true to himself and his people. Europe may not realise this vital necessity at the present moment, because it has made of exploitation of non-European races a religion. But it is a false religion bound to perish in the near future. The non-European races will not for ever allow themselves to be exploited. I have endeavoured to show a way out that is peaceful human and therefore noble. It may be rejected. If it is, the alternative is a tug of war, in which each will try to pull down the other. Then, when non-Europeans will seek to exploit the Europeans, the truth of the Charkha will have to be realised. Just as, if we are to live, we must breathe not air imported from England nor eat food so imported so may we not import cloth made in England. I do not hesitate to carry the doctrine to its logical limit and say that Bengal dare not import her cloth even from Bombay or from Banga Lakshmi. If Bengal will live her natural and free life without exploiting the rest of India or the world outside, she must manufacture her cloth in her own villages as she grows her corn there. Machinery has its place : it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An improved plough is a good thing. But if by some chance one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the

same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

The Irish analogy does not take us very far. It is perfect in so far as it enables us to realise the necessity of economic co-operation. But Indian circumstances being different, the method of working out co-operation is necessarily different. For Indian distress every effort at co-operation has to centre round the Charkha if it is to apply to the majority of the inhabitants of this vast peninsula 1900 miles long and 1500 broad. A Sir Gangaram may give us a model farm which can be no model for the penniless Indian farmer who has hardly two to three acres of land which every day runs the risk of being still further cut up.

Round the Charkha, that is, amidst the people who have shed their idleness and who have understood the value of co-operation, a national servant would build up a programme of anti-malaria campaign, improved sanitation, settlement of village disputes, conservation and breeding of cattle and hundreds of other beneficial activities. Wherever Charkha work is fairly established, all such ameliorative activity is going on according to the capacity of the villagers and the workers concerned.

It is not my purpose to traverse all the Poet's arguments in detail. Where the differences between us are not fundamental,—and these I have endeavoured to state,—there is nothing in the Poet's argument which I cannot endorse and still maintain my position regarding the Charkha. The many things about the Charkha which he has ridiculed I have never said. The merits I have claimed for the Charkha remain undamaged by the Poet's battery.

One thing, and one thing only, has hurt me, the Poet's belief, again picked up from table talk, that I look upon Ram Mohan Rai as a 'pigmy'. Well, I have never anywhere described that great reformer as a pigmy much less regarded him as such. He is to me as much a giant as he is to the Poet. I do not remember any occasion save one when I had to use

Ram Mohan Rai's name. That was in connection with Western education. This was on the Cuttack sands now four years ago. What I do remember having said was that it was possible to attain highest culture without Western education. And when some one mentioned Ram Mohan Rai, I remember having said that he was a pigmy compared to the unknown authors say of the Upanishads. This is altogether different from looking upon Ram Mohan Rai as a pigmy. I do not think meanly of Tennyson if I say that he was a pigmy before Milton or Shakespeare. I claim that I enhance the greatness of both. If I adore the Poet as he knows I do in spite of differences between us, I am not likely to disparage the greatness of the man who made the great reform movement of Bengal possible and of which the Poet is one of the finest of fruits.

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*19th November, 1925*

### THE NAKED TRUTH

"We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know it is said at missionary meetings that we conquered India. We conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we should hold it. ("Shame.") Call shame if you like. I am stating facts. I am interested in missionary work in India and have done much work of that kind, but I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general, and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular."

This is reported to have been said by Sir William Joynson-Hicks. But he is not the first minister to have reminded us of our serfdom. Why should truth be at all unpalatable? It must do us good to know ourselves as we are—destined to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the benefit of whom—

soever will claim us by the prowess of his sword. It is good too that due emphasis is laid on Lancashire goods. The sword will be sheathed as soon as Manchester calico ceases to be saleable in India. It is much more economical, expeditious and possible to give up the use of Manchester and therefore foreign calico than to blunt the edge of Sir William's sword. The process will multiply the number of swords and therefore also miseries in the world. Like opium production the world manufacture of swords needs to be restricted. The sword is probably responsible for more misery in the world than opium. Hence do I say that if India takes to the spinning wheel she will contribute to the restriction of armament and peace of the world as no other country and nothing else can.

M. K. G.

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#### GOVERNMENT SERVANTS AND A. I. S. A

A Government servant writes to say that he has been a habitual Khaddar wearer for the last four years, and his Khaddar is made out of yarn of his own spinning. He is a regular spinner, but being a Government servant has not hitherto belonged to any association. He now enquires whether the A. I. S. A. being, as its preamble shows, non-political in character, he may become its member. I am certainly of opinion that even the Viceroy can become a member of the Association with perfect impunity if he approves of its objects. Unless therefore there is anything in the rules of Government Service debarring Government servants from becoming members of any association whatsoever although non-political, no Government servant who is in sympathy with A. I. S. A. should hesitate to become its member. The same correspondent asks whether it is obligatory to spin half an hour daily or whether a member may finish the whole quota as soon as he can. According to the constitution of the Association it is open to any one to send the whole of his annual subscription of twelve thousand yards at once. It is not obligatory to spin daily. But it is

certainly advisable to do so even though one may have finished his quota.

M. K. G.

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*10th December, 1925*

NATIONAL EDUCATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

The Gujarat Vidyapith had its annual convocation for the granting of degrees and prizes. There was the annual stock-taking an unvarnished truthful tale for diminution in the number of boys and girls studying in the various institutions managed under it or affiliated to it. Gujarat has perhaps the best financed national institutions if not also the best managed. Of these institutions, at least, it can be said that it is not due to want of funds that they appear to be dwindling.

There can be no doubt that national institutions are just now not popular. They cannot boast handsome and expensive buildings or furniture. They cannot boast highly paid teachers and professors. Nor can they claim continuity of tradition or method. Nor can they promise alluring careers.

What they claim offers no temptation to many. They claim many self-less, patriotic teachers who are living in penury and want, so that the youth of the country may benefit by their tuition. These institutions teach hand-spinning and all it means. They teach the art of service. They try to impart instruction through the medium of the vernaculars. They endeavour to revive national games and teach national music. They strive to prepare the boys for service in the villages and to that end cultivate in them fellow-feeling with the poor of India. But this is not sufficiently attractive. Hence the falling off in numbers.

The so-called unattractiveness is, however, not the sole reason for the unpopularity of these institutions. Many things were done in 1921—that year of excitement, intoxication and

hope. The intoxication having subsided, depression has followed as a matter of course. The boys have gone in for calculation and not knowing that patriotism is not a matter of mathematical calculation have arrived at wrong conclusions and given preference to the Government schools and colleges. No fault of theirs. Everything around us has been reduced to terms of commerce and bargain. It is too much to expect boys and girls to rise above the surrounding atmosphere.

Nor is this all. National teachers are not perfect. They are not selfless. They are not all above petty intrigues. They are not all patriotic. Again, no fault of theirs. We are all creatures of circumstances. Brought up only to work as servants under constant constraint and with all initiative killed in us, we cannot respond to the call for self-sacrifice, for love of the country above love of self or family, for service without distinction.

It is, therefore, perfectly possible to account for the present depression. But my faith in national schools as in every other item of our original programme is undying. I recognise the depression in the national barometer and therefore even promote Congress resolutions recognising the situation. But I remain unaffected by it and invite others to do likewise. These national institutions in spite of their falls are to me so many oases in the desert of our hopes and aspirations. From them must rise the nation of the future, as they even today supply to us the largest number of unpaid or poorly paid silent workers. Go wherever you will, you cannot but find non-co-operating young men and even young girls who are devoting all their powers to the service of the motherland without the slightest expectation of reward.

I must, therefore, refuse to listen to the advice of a critic who writes me to say that the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya should be closed because of the diminishing numbers. If the people support it or if the teachers have the stamina whether the people support it or not, the Mahavidyalaya must continue so long as there is one true boy or girl who will finish his or her

training in that institution with all its ideals. Fair weather was no condition of the continuance of that institution. As with national servants so with national institutions. They must go through their programme through fair weather or foul.

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*17th December, 1925*

### A STUDENT'S QUESTIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A student who is carrying on post-graduate studies in America writes:

"I am one of those who are extremely interested in the utilisation of Indian resources as one of the means for remedying the poverty of India. This is my sixth year in this country. My special field is wood-chemistry. I would have entered executive service or taken up medical studies if I were not so profoundly convinced of the importance of the Industrial development of India. \* \* \* \* Would you approve of my going into industrial enterprise, say pulp and paper manufacture? What is your attitude in general on the question of adopting a sane, humanitarian industrial policy for India? Do you stand for the progress of science? I mean such progress which brings blessings to mankind, *e. g.* the work of Pasteur of France and that of Dr. Bunting of Toronto?"

I answer this question publicly as so many inquiries are received by me from students all over, and as so much misconception exists regarding my views on science. I should have no objection whatsoever to industrial enterprise such as the student has in view. Only I would not call it necessarily humanitarian. A humanitarian industrial policy for India means to me a glorified revival of handspinning, for through it alone can pauperism, which is blighting the lives of millions of human beings in their own cottages in this land, be immediately removed. Everything else may thereafter be added, so as to increase the productive capacity of this country. I would



therefore have all young men with a scientific training to utilise their skill in making the spinning wheel, if it is possible, a more efficient instrument of production in India's cottages. I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation. I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence. If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection, the human kind could well have done without it. And I see the day clearly dawning when the honest scientist of the West, will put limitations upon the present methods of pursuing knowledge. Future measurements will take note not merely of the human family but of all that lives and even as we are slowly but surely discovering that it is an error to suppose that Hindus can thrive upon the degradation of a fifth of themselves or that peoples of the West can rise or live upon the exploitation and degradation of the Eastern and African nations, so shall we realise in the fulness of time, that our dominion over the lower order of creation is not for their slaughter, but for their benefit equally with ours. For I am as certain that they are endowed with a soul as that I am.

The same student asks: 'I would like to know your very frank evaluation of the work of Christian missionaries in India. Do you believe that Christianity has some contribution to make to the life of our country? Can we do without Christianity?'

In my opinion Christian missionaries have done good to us indirectly. Their direct contribution is probably more harmful than otherwise. I am against the modern method of proselytising. Years' experience of proselytising both in South Africa and India has convinced me that it has not raised the general moral tone of the converts who have imbibed the superficialities of European civilisation, and have missed the teaching of

Jesus. I must be understood to refer to the general tendency and not to brilliant exceptions. The indirect contribution, on the other hand, of Christian missionary effort is great. It has stimulated Hindu Mussalman religious research. It has forced us to put our own houses in order. The great educational and curative institutions of Christian missions I also count, amongst indirect results, because they have been established, not for their own sakes, but as an aid to proselytising.

The world, and therefore we, can no more do without the teaching of Jesus than we can without that of Mahomed or the Upanishads. I hold all these to be complementary of one-another, in no case, exclusive. Their true meaning, their interdependence and inter-relation, have still to be revealed to us. We are but indifferent representatives of our respective faiths, which we belie more often than not.

The third question put by the student is as follows: 'In our united states of India, are we going to leave the present native states intact, or have a democracy there? In order to have political unity, what should be our common language? Why cant we make it English?'

The Indian states are even now changing their character, be it ever so imperceptibly. They cannot be autocratic when the bulk of India becomes democratic. What, however, Indian democracy will be no one can tell. It is easy enough to foresee the future, if English were our common language. For it would be then the democracy of a mere handful. But if we desire to realise, as we must, the political unity of the vast mass of Indian humanity, he must be a prophet who would foretell the future. And the common language of the vast mass can never be English. It is a matter of course a resultant of Hindi and Urdu or Hindustani as I would call it. Our English speech has isolated us from the millions of our countrymen. We have become foreigners in our own land. The manner in which English speech has permeated the political-minded men of India constitutes in my humble opinion a crime against the country, indeed humanity; because we are a

stumbling-block in the progress of our own country, and the progress of what is after all a continent must mean the progress of humanity and *vice versa*. Every English educated Indian who has penetrated the villages has realised this burning truth, even as I have. I have profound admiration for the English language and many noble qualities of the English people, but I have no manner of doubt in my mind that the English language and the English people occupy a place in our life which retards our progress and theirs as well.

24th December, 1925

### A YEAR'S WORK

The following extracts from the annual Report of the All India Spinners' Association just published will be read with interest :

#### PRODUCTION & SALE

PROVINCES.	PRODUCTION.	SALES.
Ajmer	Rs. 26474	Rs. 25678
Andhra	Rs. 388940	Rs. 636569
Assam	...	...
Behar	Rs. 168464	Rs. 242421
Bengal	Rs. 247626	Rs. 211077
Berar	...	...
Bombay	...	Rs. 424179
Burma	...	Rs. 23165
C. P. Hindi	Rs. 3380	Rs. 16793
C. P. Marathi	..	Rs. 15640
Delhi	Rs. 10807	Rs. 20827
Gujarat	Rs. 42423	Rs. 376141
Karnatak	Rs. 79564	Rs. 120041
Kerala	Rs. 3877	Rs. 26420
Maharashtra	Rs. 9565	Rs. 78916
Punjab	Rs. 65576	Rs. 80974
Sindh	Rs. 11350	Rs. 15061
Tamil Nadu	Rs. 812787	Rs. 952136
U. P.	Rs. 27498	Rs. 60906
Utkal	Rs. 4703	Rs. 29117

Total ... .. Rs. 1903034      Rs. 3361061\*

\* The sale figures involve considerable duplication.

The above figures are for the period from 1-10-24 to 30-9-25. They for the most part cover only production and sale under the supervision of the Board and represent only the results of the activities that have sprung out of the non-co-operation movement. They do not represent such production as has been traditionally in existence in several parts of Assam, Rajasthan, Púñjab and Andhra, independent of this movement.

It will be seen from the above that there has been remarkable progress in the case of Tamil Nadu, Bengal and Behar. Tamil Nadu has increased its production by nearly 75% and at the same time organised local sales in a systematic way so that it has been able to consume Rs. 4½ lakhs, nearly equal to its total output of the previous year. Bengal and Behar are also well organised and are making vigorous efforts towards pushing on their activities. Their production this year is more than double that of the previous year. Andhra figures also represent fairly considerable work, though, owing to the excessive decentralisation there even now the reports cannot be said to be complete. The provinces of Karnatak, U. P. and Punjab are working steadily and offer promise of extensive work in the future. Bombay, and Gujarat are known as good markets for khadi. Gujarat is also making an effort to increase local production. The possibilities in Rajputana, Utkal, Assam and the districts surrounding Delhi are great but today we have no organisations in these provinces that can deal with the facilities available there. Attempts are however being made to set up suitable agencies of work in these areas.

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#### AID FROM MUNICIPALITIES & LOCAL BOARDS.

It may not be out of place in a report of the Board to mention that the advent of Congressmen in local bodies has led in some instances to these Bodies taking interest in Khadi. The General Secretary of the A. I. C. C. after the Belguam Congress circularised the municipalities and local Boards in various parts of the country to enlist their sympathies in favour of Khadi. The replies received from some of them, especially

from the United Provinces, and the information received later from the Behar Provincial Khadi Board disclosed the fact that many of them have abolished the octroi duty on Khadi, given orders for Khadi and introduced spinning in schools. The efforts of the Allahabad municipality towards the introduction of spinning in their schools have met with remarkable success. Benares municipality also has made efforts in this connection with success. The Bombay Corporation has ordered Khadi for over Rs. 12,000 for the requirements of the King Edward Memorial Hospital. In Sindh the municipality of Karachi has been ordering large quantities of Khadi for the last two or three years. In the South the municipality of Tirupati has done appreciable work in Khadi. It has introduced spinning in schools and is also maintaining a khadi bhandar which has sold khadi worth Rs. 3,440-8-6 during the year.

The following municipal and other local bodies have introduced or resolved to introduce spinning in the schools under their control :

- |     |                         |  |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 1.  | Ahmedabad Municipality. | (In girls' schools)  |
| 2.  | Cocanada                | "  |
| 3.  | Tirupati                | "  |
| 4.  | Benares                 | "  |
| 5.  | Lucknow                 | "  |
| 6.  | Allahabad               | "  |
| 7.  | Basti District Board.   |  |
| 8.  | Balasore                | " "  |
| 9.  | Puri                    | " (In primary schools).  |
| 10. | Cuttack                 | " (In girls' schools).   |
| 11. | Sambalpur,              | " (In primary schools).  |
| 12. | Gaya                    | " (In lower primary schools for boys and in all girl's schools). |
| 13. | Patna                   | " "  |
| 14. | Shahabad                | " "  |
| 15. | Saran                   | " "  |
| 16. | Champaran               | " "  |

The following municipalities have either reduced or abolished the octroi on khadi :

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Hardwar municipality. | 4. Hardoi municipality. |
| 2. Atrauli „             | 5. Sitapur „            |
| 3. Lucknow „             |                         |

The following have encouraged khadi by resolving to purchase the same for municipal purposes and for uniform of employees :

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Allahabad municipality.   | 8. Banda District Board |
| 2. Lucknow „                 | 9. Pertabgarh „ „       |
| 3. Karachi „                 | 10. Gonda „ „           |
| 4. Ahmedabad „               | 11. Sitapur „ „         |
| 5. Benares „                 | 12. Meerut „ „          |
| 6. Barabanki District Board. | 13. Bombay Corporation  |
| 7. Jalawn „ „                |                         |

M. K. G.

## IN THE GRIP OF UNTOUCHABILITY

We have heard much about untouchability and unapproachability of Travancore because there was Satyagraha there. The lamp of suffering brought the Travancore dirt to light but it seems that there is much more of it in Cochin than in Travancore. There the repeated attempts to bring even a resolution before the Cochin Legislative Assembly asking the Cochin State to remove the ban on the use of public roads by untouchables was disallowed.

An assiduous member enquired in the Cochin Legislative Assembly 'how many tanks and wells maintained by Government or Municipal funds were closed to untouchables?' The reply was that 61 tanks and 123 wells were so closed. It would have been interesting if a supplementary question had been asked to elicit how many wells and tanks were accessible to untouchables.

Another question asked was 'On what ground was the use of certain roads constructed and maintained by the Public Works

Department prohibited to untouchables, euphemistically called by the questioner 'non-Hindus?' Reasons given without any sense of shame on behalf of the Cochin Government were "the roads are in close proximity to temples and palace. There cannot be a sudden break with the past. Longstanding customs have to be respected." The reader must note the word 'palace.' One may suppose, therefore, that the Panchama has no right of personal petition, for, he cannot traverse roads near the palace, much less can he enter them. The officials who gave the heartless answer are able, educated and cultured men, in other walks of life even liberal minded; but they justify a cruel, heartless and irreligious custom on the grounds of antiquity.

One learns in law books that crimes and immoralities do not enjoy the benefit of prescription. Their antiquity cannot make them respectable. But it is evidently otherwise in the Cochin State. Who can deny that the custom of untouchability is immoral, barbarous and cruel? Thus the laws of Cochin State are in a way much worse than those of South Africa. The common law of South Africa refuses to admit equality between white and coloured races. The common law of Cochin bases inequality on birth in a particular group. But the incidence of inequality in Cochin is infinitely more inhuman than in South Africa; for an untouchable in Cochin is deprived of more human rights than the coloured man in South Africa. There is no such thing as unapproachability or invisibility in South Africa. I have no desire to single out Cochin for its disgraceful treatment of untouchables; for, it is still unfortunately common to Hindus all over India more or less. But, in Cochin, besides the so-called sanction of religion, untouchability has the sanction of the State. Mere levelling up of public opinion, therefore, can be of no avail in Cochin unless it becomes so strong as to compel the State to abolish the barbarous custom.

M. K. G.

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*14th January, 1925*

## THE CONGRESS KHADI-EXHIBITION

BY RICHARD B. GREGG

An exhibition is not a mere show. It is a form of education. As such it should be both informative and persuasive, a strong stimulus to understanding, realisation, thought, and action. It should be adapted to the motive of those who attend it. These include the seeker for amusement and curiosity, the ignorant person who wants to know something, the informed man who wants to know more, the sceptic, and the expert seeking comparisons and suggestions. Some are interested in ideas of quantity, some in matters of quality, some in works of development and progress, some in implements and methods.

Bearing all this in mind, we may say that Cawnpore Khadi Exhibition was a success and yet that it left much room for the future to improve upon. And when we consider the constant pressure of work on all Khadi workers and how greatly they are hampered by shortness of funds, we realise better the difficulty of preparing the exhibits and the excellence of the results.

The grounds for the Exhibition were laid out in the form of a large enclosed square or courtyard. The booths, made of woven matting and facing inward, formed the sides of the square. Two sides were given up to Khadi, the remainder to miscellaneous *swadeshi* manufactures. In the centre were four large buildings, two of which were devoted entirely to Khadi cloth, the others to exhibits of other arts. Most of the outer Khadi booths were devoted to ginning, carding, spinning and weaving demonstrations, in which the various implements were in operation most of the time. In other booths large piles of khaddar were lying for sale.

The largest and most detailed exhibit was that of the Khadi Pratishthan of Calcutta. Displayed there were samples of old and new types of Charkhas, carding bows, *taklis* and



hand-gins. Books and pamphlets describing the art were on sale. There was a large pile of yarn and one of cloth, each representing the total output of one day by the workers under its guidance. It also had large stocks of Khadi on sale:—*dhoties, saris*, coatings and shirtings. Cheerful and well-informed attendants were always at hand ready to serve the questioner or purchaser.

The next best exhibit was that of the Gandhi Kutir of Bihar. They had both an excellent sales depot with large stocks of cloth and active salesmen and also a demonstration booth, well provided with a loom, Charkhas, etc. in operation. Of all the demonstration booths, that of Andhra was perhaps the most interesting, as there the work was that of making fine count yarn and fine Khaddar. It was a display of greater skill and art than that required for ordinary Khaddar. One municipality, that of Allahabad, is to be commended for its carding and spinning demonstration booth. There was an interesting Marwar loom in operation in another booth. Books and pamphlets were on sale on behalf of the A. I. S. A., but the booth was lacking any design and the literature was inadequately displayed.

For the experts, the carding demonstration on Dec. 26th and the spinning competition on the 27th, together with the unofficial fine-count spinners' competition on the 28th was very interesting. But they were marred by being held on the ground in a rather dark booth, behind a screen through which the spectators could gaze only with difficulty. A raised platform, roofed over but open on all sides would have been vastly more satisfactory to the onlookers. There were eight entrants; two from Satyagraha Ashram, three from Gandhi Kutir and three from Bengal,—Khadi Pratishthan. The competition lasted four continuous hours. Each spinner had previously carded his own material and prepared his own slivers. The contest was very close, the three winners being almost bracketed, the score of Keshav Gandhi of Satyagrah Ashram, being 186.69 marks, that of Usman Kazi of Bengal, being 186.2. and that of

Satyanarayan Singh of Gandhi Kutir being 185.45. The marks were based on a combination of items of speed, uniformity, yardage, strength, neatness, waste, etc. The yardage and count of the three first men in respective order was 1,764 yards of 20.5 count, 2,345 yards of 16.1 count, and 2,284 yards of 16.4 count.

In the unofficial fine-count spinning there were entrants from Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra, but it was not completed.

These contests illustrated both the skill of the contestants and the qualities and capacities of different types of Charkhas. They deserve more attention and study than they have yet received.

The cloth exhibits in the central buildings were excellent. There were samples of plain white, printed and dyed work. There were *dhoties*, *saris*, shirtings, coatings, towels, blankets, shawls, *assans*, *durries*, bags and knitted wear fancy work. Here the number of exhibitors was large, and both the quantity and number of kinds of Khadi were more interesting, instructive, and encouraging. The Gandhi Kutir had a very interesting display of dhoti cloths woven in successive years from 1921 to date, showing the marked improvement in quality of both yarn and weaving from year to year. The printed work of Furukabad and the woollen work of Bijapur were especially interesting and beautiful.

Altogether the exhibition was said to have been better than most of those of preceding years. It is a great labour to prepare a good exhibit and display it efficiently. All the exhibitors deserve praise for what they accomplished, for their displays were interesting and instructive. The large daily attendance and the large sales of Khaddar were both evidence of the important place which Khadi has attained, and of its steady growth.

Next year's exhibition, it is hoped, will be still better. One would like to see more exhibits showing the progress from year to year in quality of work; more large placards stating the growth in quantity of yarn and cloth and total sale value from

year to year. One would like to know how the number of people employed in villages has increased, the number of organisers, the numbers and locations of villages where work is in progress. Maps showing such places would be attractive. Photographs might play a fine part in instruction. In a darkened booth the magic lantern pictures and lecture prepared by Satish Babu, and similar pictures would be exceedingly effective. One missed an adequate summarising display of information by the A. I. S. A. in the form of placards, photographs, leaflets and pamphlets. More open places for contests and demonstrations of processes would be attractive and valuable. Signs could be better designed, more informative and more widely used and effectively displayed. Wider announcement of the exact time and places of competitions and demonstrations would help.

These are but suggestions for expanding and intensifying in future the educational work possible in such exhibits. Preparation is required months in advance by the individual exhibitors as well as by the central committee. And such work should be considered by all as a very important part of the work of stimulating sales, and persuading and educating people of all kinds to understand the importance of Khadi to the nation.

Many thanks are due to this year's exhibitors and the committee. They have given a fine stimulus for the future.

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*28th January, 1925*

## SPINNING IN MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

BY M. K. GANDHI

One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the growing interest displayed by Municipal and other local bodies in the development of handspinning and Khaddar. The last report of the 'All India Spinners' Association gives a list of such bodies as have shown their sympathy with the Khadi movement. Many of the Municipalities in U. P. are understood

to have reduced or abolished the octroi on Khadi, the latest to abolish it being the Mirzapur Municipal Board. Many more in U. P. as well as other parts of the country have made large purchases of Khadi for the uniforms of their employees or for other purposes. The small municipality of Tirupati is even maintaining a Khadi *Bhandar* of his own.

But the most interesting of the activities in this connection are the efforts made by several of these local bodies to introduce spinning in the curricula of the schools under their control. Many of the District Boards in Bihar and Orissa, acting on a resolution passed by the Legislative Council in the hey-day of Non-co-operation, introduced spinning in their schools, but the results of their experiment are not fully available. Of the efforts so far made, those of the Allahabad Municipality have met with remarkable success. Those who visited the Khadi Exhibition at Cawnpore and witnessed the spinning demonstration given by some of the pupils of the Allahabad Municipal schools will attest to the success achieved. An account of this Municipality's activities in this respect appeared some months ago in the columns of *Young India*. Here are figures taken from a later report which will show the extent of the progress made.

There are 24 boys' schools under the Municipality and 13 girls' schools. The number of boys is 2,451 and of girls 657. The total number of teachers is 187, of whom 75 are lady teachers. Of the pupils nearly 80 per cent of the boys in the higher standards are trained in spinning and 30 to 50 per cent of the boys in lower standards know spinning. The percentage is even higher among the girls. Nearly 80 per cent of the teachers in boys' schools and as much as 95 per cent of the lady teachers are trained in spinning.

Lack of space prevents them from keeping the necessary number of Charkhas the average per school being not more than 10. Every boy has to spin for a period of 45 minutes a day. The total output of these schools per day is 1,189 tolas, the count of the yarn varying from 6 to 15."

All this has been done without the slightest prejudice to the ordinary literary instruction of the pupils. The success achieved is remarkable. The report says more Charkhas could be introduced and greater output shown, but for the fact that there was not sufficient accommodation in the school buildings. The Municipality has readily adopted the suggestion that *Taklis* may be introduced with advantage in such schools and already 200 *Taklis* have been ordered by them.

The latest in the field is the Poona Municipality which has by a recent resolution introduced Takli-spinning in its primary schools.

This Municipality had made an attempt to introduce Charkhas in its schools in the year 1922, but owing to various causes the attempt was then unsuccessful. It has now made a fresh start by introducing the *Taklis* in the upper classes in two of its schools—one being a boys' school and the other a girls' school. It is also intended to open a special class for the training of teachers both male and female. At present 175 pupils are plying their *Taklis* for three quarters of an hour every day. The President of the Municipality and the President of the School Board are evincing great interest in the experiment and the special committee entrusted with the work are anxious to ensure its success. There is no doubt that if this interest on the part of the Municipality continues we may see before long all the eight thousand students in its primary schools spinning. Only let the committee get one or two expert spinners, let them give the pupils the best *Taklis* and good slivers of well-carded cotton. The most remarkable results achieved by the schools of the Labour Union of Ahmedabad should spur all Municipalities and Local Boards to similar efforts.

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*4th February, 1936*

## THE SPINNING WHEEL IN MYSORE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The "Hindu" publishes a long report of what it calls "a grand Charkha demonstration and spinning competition" held recently at Bangalore under the auspices of its Spinners' Association. The chief event of this interesting and instructive function was the address delivered by the Chairman, Mr. Z. Mecci, the Director of Industries and Commerce, Mysore. Mr. Mecci gave an exhaustive, and, in my opinion, a convincing reply to the critics of the spinning wheel. He insisted that the wheel was to be considered from the point of view 'of poverty and unemployment.'

"It was well-known," he said, "that more than 50 per cent of the population was engaged in agriculture and for about half the year they all remained idle. Not only this but the rainfall was so fitful and uncertain that famine conditions seemed to be a recurring factor every time."

And he showed that for this population the spinning wheel was the only industry during its leisure hours. He added that but for the distortion and degeneration of the national taste, Khaddar would make much greater headway than it had. Of the earning capacity of the wheel, Mr. Mecci said.

"It has been ascertained by careful calculation that a person by devoting  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours a day to spinning could easily earn Rs. 2-8 a month, and taking the total number of persons on an average in a family to 5, and 2 of these to take to spinning  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours a day, the total extra income to the 'Have nots' in State would amount to more than 50 lakhs of rupees a month, or 6 crores of rupees per year. Did their critics seriously ask them to throw away this sum by abstaining from spinning? There was no doubt that the spinning industry had a great future before it and was sure to gain a great stimulus, if the educated, cultured and the

wealthy classes were favourably disposed towards the use of Khaddar."

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*11th February, 1926*

### SPINNING AT SABARMATI ASHRAM

Spinning and prayer are the two things that are more after Gandhiji's heart than anything else, and ever since he began giving more time to the Ashram, he has concentrated his energies on systematising both of them. The inmates of the Ashram have each his own work, and though there are the principles that hold them together, only common activities can bring them together in an active, communal spirit. They are spinning and prayer, which can make the inmates though "Distinct in individualities,

But like each other ev'n as those who love."

To make them both real unifying factors it was necessary to make them more living. A few days' talks and conferences were enough for the prayers, which are to-day more regular and much better attended than any time before. Spinning was done by all, but there was nothing like regularity about it. The children of the school had a regular period and their yarn was everyday noted in the register. 'Why not have a register for the whole of the Ashram?' suggested an inmate. Vinoba who came here some time ago to infect all with his spinning enthusiasm, heartily supported the suggestion. After a year's regular study of it he has come to the conclusion that the average speed of a spinner must be 430 yards per hour, and he exhorted everyone to reach the average. To the regularity was added this anxiety to reach the average and during the last fortnight we have had remarkable results. Almost every man, woman and child makes it a point to find his or her half-hour or hour to spin, out of the daily routine of work, and after every evening prayer answers the spinning roll-call. Let each school and Ashram where spinning is part of daily duties introduce the experiment and note the results.

We shall first have the figures of daily attendance *i.e.* daily spinners. It is noteworthy how it has gone on improving. The following are the first week's figures ;

		Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tue	Wed.
Men	{ Total No.	47	47	47	47	54	55	55
	{ Spinners	29	37	36	38	43	48	45
Women	{ Total No.	28	28	28	30	30	30	30
	{ Spinners	16	24	25	26	20	24	24
Children	{ Total No.	29	29	29	29	29	32	32
	{ Spinners	25	27	26	27	14	29	28

I may mention that non-spinners include absentees and ailing people as well as the defaulters. But the improvement in the number of spinners may safely be said to be due to a reduction in the number of defaulters. Thus on the first day only 61.7 per cent of the men and 57 per cent of the women on the roll spun. On the last day their number was respectively 81.8 and 80 per cent. The number of spinners amongst children remained constant, because they have been regular spinners for some time. But even they slackened on Monday, that being their off-day. The number that day was as low as 50 per cent. It is interesting to note however that Monday next week the number went up to 65 per cent. Let us now compare the average attendance of both the weeks :

	1st Week	2nd Week
Men	72 per cent	81.7 per cent
Women	72 „	76.6 „
Children	84 „	88 „

Let us now take the figures of production. We shall first compare the production of the same day in the two weeks, on which other conditions were also very nearly the same.

	Monday 25-1-26		Monday 1-2-26
Men	{ Total No. 54	{ 9569 R. 56	11,116 R.
	{ Spinners 43	{ 222 av. 43	258 Av.
Women	{ Total No. 30	{ 5509 R. 30	5377 R.
	{ Spinners 20	{ 276 av. 20	269 av.
Children	{ Total No. 29	{ 2469 R. 32	5487 R.
	{ Spinners 14	{ 176 av. 21	261 av.



R. means round of 4 feet each. Av. means average rounds per spinner. Note the remarkable improvement amongst men and children. The total in one case has increased by 1500 rounds and the average by 36 rounds, and amongst children the total has been more than doubled and the increase in the average is 85 rounds !

Let us now take the total production of each week :

	First Week	Second Week
Men	72,837 rounds	81,393 rounds
Women	36,627 "	41,472 "
Children	44,117 "	47,005 "
Total	153,581 rounds	169,870 rounds
	<i>i. e.</i> 204,776 yards	<i>i. e.</i> 226,492 yards

which shows an increase of about 21,000 yards in a week.

Let us now see to what extent working at this rate the inmates can supply their own clothing needs. The population may be taken to be approximately 130 and the total needs of the Ashram at the rate of 20 sq. yards each is 2,600 square yards. Now a square inch of cloth requires 2 yards of yarn of 15 counts (the average count spun nowadays). This means that 2600 square yards of cloth would require  $2600 \times 144 \times 9 \times 2 = 67,39,200$  yards of yarn *i. e.* 1,27,329 yards every week in a year of 48 weeks. So we have more than reached this average. I wish every spinner had also noted the time for which he spun, in which case we could have had the average time of spinning also.

M. D.

25th February, 1925

961 YARDS PER HOUR !

It will be remembered that the Baherok Ashram, which Gandhiji visited in May last year, showed a remarkable record of progress in spinning-speed since the visit. When Gandhiji visited it the highest record was 300 yards per hour. After eleven days of the visit and after correction of the defects in the

wheels which were pointed out, the speed had risen to 581 yards of 16 counts. The principal of the school says that the speed has now reached 961 yards of 9 counts. Whilst we congratulate the school for the sustained progress in speed, we may say that it is so remarkable that one is tempted to inquire whether the time taken up in winding has been included in the time of spinning, and whether the yarn spun is of the standard strength, twist and evenness. For in noting records of maximum speed in the past the time taken up in winding has always been included and due emphasis laid on the strength and twist and evenness. We should also like to know the variety of the spinning wheel used and the number of the hourly revolutions of the spindle.

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*4th March, 1926*

#### FOR JUVENILES

Owing to the repeated requests of young friends under 18 years to become members of the All India Spinners' Association, the Council has passed a resolution, at its last meeting, permitting boys and girls under 18 years who are habitual wearers of Khaddar to become members upon sending 1000 yards per month of their own spinning. The idea is to encourage boys and girls to cultivate regularity, and to establish a moral bond between themselves and the poorest in the land. And this inestimable advantage is gained apart from the art of spinning being a training for the eye and fingers.

Youths who wish to become members will be expected to spin daily for at least half an hour and if they will set apart a particular half-hour for the purpose, they will find that it will induce a regularity in all other studies and work that they may undertake. They will be expected to keep their wheels in perfect order, learn to repair them and learn also the art of carding and making their own slivers. All these processes take up very little time, that is, for those who love their work.

For school-boys and girls, I recommend not the spinning wheel but the *takli*. It has been ascertained that the *takli* enables one easily to spin 80 yards per hour. Spinning on the *takli* at the rate of half an hour daily gives one the required monthly subscription of 1000 yards.

I hope therefore that many boys and girls will register themselves as members, subject to the permission of their parents or guardians. So far as schools are concerned, it will be saving of postage if school-masters will take charge of the yarn that may be spun and make one parcel taking care to attach cards to the quantity spun by each boy or girl. The parcels should be addressed to the Director, Technical Department of the All India Spinners' Association, Satyagrahashram, Sabarmati.

Juveniles or their guardians at the time of sending self-spun yarn should note the name, age, sex and address of the spinner, give also the number of yards and state that the spinner habitually wears hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar. M. K. G.

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*4th March, 1926*

### A REPUDIATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

Rev. H. R. Scott at present stationed at Surat writes :

"I have been reading with much interest your 'Story' in *Young India*,—as I read with interest all that you write,—and I am specially interested in your account of those early days in Rajkot, because my first 14 years in India were spent in Kathiawar, one year in Gogha and 13 years in Rajkot. I was the only missionary in Rajkot during those years (from 1883 to 1897), and what you say about Christian missionaries in Rajkot standing at a corner near the High School and pouring abuse on Hindus and their gods fills me with a painful wonder. I certainly never preached 'at a corner near the High School'; my regular preaching station was under a banyan tree in the Para Bazar; and I certainly never "poured

abuse on Hindus and their gods." That would be a strange way to win a hearing from Hindus. Then you say that a well-known Hindu was baptised at that time, and that "he had to eat beef and drink liquor, and to change his clothes and go about in European costume, including a hat." No wonder such a story got on your nerves, if you believed it. Well, I have been over 42 years in India, and I have never heard of such a thing happening; and indeed I know it to be quite contrary to what all missionaries with whom I am acquainted teach and believe and practise. During my time in Rajkot I baptised a number of Brahmins and Jain Sadhus. They certainly had not to 'eat beef and drink liquor', either at their baptism or at any other time. I have eaten beef myself of course as a European, but I have never drunk liquor in my life. As I know, none of the Brahmins and Jains who were baptised by me in Rajkot ever ate beef or drank liquor. I know of course that this kind of story is told about converts to Christianity in Kathiawar and elsewhere in India. It is obviously the wilful invention of people who wish to prevent the spread of Christianity in India and hope thereby to frighten young Hindus who show an inclination to learn the truth about Christianity, and no doubt it has had its result in deterring many such honest inquirers as yourself. But surely you must have had many opportunities since then of discovering that that particular libel is without foundation, and as a sincere lover of truth you cannot wish to lend the great weight of your authority to perpetuate such a wilfully malicious misrepresentation of Christian missionaries. Please forgive me for writing so strongly, and for troubling you at all in the matter; but as many of my Hindu friends who know that I was the missionary at Rajkot during those years might not unreasonably suppose that you refer to me, I am sure that you will do what you can to make it clear that this is not so."

Though the preaching took place over forty years ago the painful memory of it is still vivid before me. What I have heard and read since has but confirmed that first impression.

I have read several missionary publications and they are able to see only the dark side and paint it darker still. The famous hymn of Bishop Heber's—'Greenland's icy mountains'—is a clear libel on Indian humanity. I was favoured with some literature even at the Yerowda prison by well-meaning missionaries, which seemed to be written as if merely to belittle Hinduism. About beef-eating and wine-drinking at baptism I have merely stated what I heard and I have said as much in my writing. And whilst I accept Mr. Scott's repudiation I must say that though I have mixed freely among thousands of Christian Indians, I know very few who have scruples about eating beef or other flesh meats and drinking intoxicating liquors. When I have gently reasoned with them, they have quoted to me the celebrated verse 'call thou nothing unclean as if it referred to eating and gave a license for indulgence. I know that many Hindus eat meat, some eat even beef and drink wines. They are not converts. Converts are those who are 'born again' or should be. A higher standard is expected of those who change their faith, if the change is a matter of the heart and not of convenience. But I must not enter into deeper waters. It is a matter of pleasure to me to be able to say that if I have had painful experiences of Christians and Christian missionaries I have pleasant ones also which I treasure. There is no doubt that among them the spirit of toleration is growing. Among individuals there is also a deeper study of Hinduism and other faiths and an appreciation of their beauties, and among some even an admission that the other great faiths of the world are not false. One is thankful for the growing liberal spirit but I have the conviction that much still remains to be done in that direction.

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11th March, 1926

## STILL SHIRKING THE ISSUE

BY M. K. GANDHI

Another case like the one discussed in these pages recently has been decided in the South with reference to the vexed question of temple entry by the so-called untouchables. One Murugesan, a mala by caste, was tried before the Stationary Sub-Magistrate of Tirupathi for having ventured to enter a temple at Tiruchanur for the purpose of offering worship. The Lower Court regarded this entry as 'defilement with intent to insult the religion of a class' under section 295 of I. P. C. and fined the accused Rs. 75 or in default rigorous imprisonment for one month. Fortunately for the poor outcaste there were reformers who were interested in him. The case went in appeal. The appellate court sustained the appeal. I quote the following from the judgment.

"In the lower Court 7 witnesses were examined for the prosecution. It is shown by their evidence that the appellant is a mala by caste, that malas are not allowed to enter the temple and that the entry of malas into the temple is considered a defilement of it. It is shown also that appellant went into the temple to the *Garbagudi* where caste Hindus alone may enter. He was then dressed properly and wearing marks of piety, the Archaka taking him for a caste Hindu, received his offering of cocoanuts and performed camphor *harathi* for him, for which service appellant paid the prescribed fee of 4 annas. After appellant departed the temple authorities found that he was a mala and as the place of worship was considered defiled by his presence it became necessary to perform a purificatory ceremony.

"The first thing to consider is whether the prosecution evidence has made out the elements of the offence so as to warrant the framing of a charge. The fact of defilement of the place of worship by the entry therein of accused who is a mala

is sufficiently made out in the sense that a ritual impurity was caused thereby. But in addition it was necessary to show that the effect was an insult to the religion of any class of persons and that the accused intended such effect or knew of its possibility. The case for the prosecution does not seem to have been conducted with this point kept in view and it has not been elicited from any of the witnesses that accused's act was an insult to the religion of the witnesses or any class of persons leaving alone the question whether accused intended such insult or knew it to be likely. On account of this defect in the state of the prosecution evidence I think the conviction cannot stand. I do not think the case should be ordered to be tried."

Again the prosecutors, the judges and the deliverers of the poor despised men were his co-religionists—Hindus. Again the accused was happily saved from rigorous imprisonment (he could not pay the exorbitant fine I presume) but again the cause remains undecided. It was open to the Hindu judge to say that the entry into a Hindu temple by a Panchama Hindu with the object of offering worship could not by any stretch of the meaning of the word 'insult' constitute an insult to the Hindu religion to which the accused claimed and was admitted to belong. It may have been improper in the estimation of some Hindus for the accused to enter the temple, it may have been contrary to custom, it may have been a hundred other things, but it was not an insult to the religion of any class such as to amount to a crime under the Indian Penal Code. It is worthy of note that the accused bore no visible marks of his despised birth. He was 'dressed properly and wearing marks of piety'. Indeed if these persecuted men choose to practice deception, it would be impossible to distinguish them from the rest. It is simple fanatical obstinacy to persist in persecuting men in the sacred name of religion. It is the persecutors who are unknowingly defiling their own religion by keeping out of public temples men who are at least as honourable as they claim to be themselves and are willing to abide by all the ceremonial rules observable by Hindus in general on such occa-

sions. More than that no man has any right to impose or expect. The heart of man only God knows. An ill-dressed Panchama may have a much cleaner heart than a meticulously dressed high-caste Hindu.

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*11th March, 1926*

## THE POET AND THE WHEEL

BY M. K. GANDHI

Inspite of the weakness of body to which the Poet himself referred in his address at the Abhoy Ashram, it was a good thing for Dr. Suresh Bannerji, the manager of the Abhoy Ashram, at Comilla, to have drawn Dr. Tagore there. The reader knows that the Abhoy Ashram was established for the purpose of Khaddar development. The Poet's acceptance of the address and such association as it may imply on his part with the Khaddar movement, dispels if any dispeller was necessary, the superstition that the poet is against the spinning wheel and the Khaddar movement in every shape or form. In the epitome of his address published in the '*Servant*', I find the following reference to the movement:

"The country is not one's own by mere accident of birth but becomes so by one's life's contribution. An animal has got its fur but man has got to spin and weave because what the animal has got, it has got once for all and ready-made. It is for man to rearrange and reshuffle for his purposes materials he finds placed before him."

But there are other pregnant facts in the address which are helpful to workers for Swaraj. This is what the Poet has to say to us:

"That we were so long kept from realising India in her true self is due to the fact that we have not by daily endeavour created her moment by moment making her healthful and fruitful."

Thus he adjures us each one individually to make daily



endeavour if we are to gain Swaraj. In the very next sentence he asks us "not to cherish the dream that Swaraj can be ours by some extraneous happening." "It can be ours" the Poet adds, "in so far as we succeed in permeating our consciousness throughout the country by service."

He tells us also how to attain unity. "We could attain unity *only through* work." That is what the inmates of the Abhay Ashram are actually doing. For through their spinning they are helping Hindus, Mussalmans, in fact everybody, who needs help through that source. They are teaching untouchable boys and girls through their school and through it teach them to spin also. Through their dispensary they are giving relief to the ailing irrespective of race or religion. They need to preach no sermon on unity. They live it. This work inspires the poet and he therefore proceeds to say :

"Life is an organic whole. It is the spirit that after all matters. It is not a fact that there is lack of strength in our arms. The fact is that our mind has not been awakened. . . . Our greatest fight here therefore is that against mental lethargy. The village is a living entity. You cannot neglect any one department of its life without injuring the other. We are to realise today the soul of our country as a great indivisible whole and likewise all our disabilities and miseries as one inter-related whole."

Referring to our failure the Poet truly says :

"Man's creation can be beautiful in so far as he has given himself to his work. The reason why our enterprises in this country fail so often is that we give only a portion of ourselves to the cause dear to our heart. We give with the right hand to steal back with the left."

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11th March, 1926

## SACRIFICIAL SPINNING

Varad is a little village in the Bardoli Taluka, with a national school that has stood many a trial, and has for its headmaster Mr. Zaverbhai Patel who has achieved in spinning a record as yet achieved by none—a record not in count (though he spins upto 83 counts), a record not in the quantity spun on a competition day, but a record in spinning each day all the year round, and reaching an aggregate of 11,25,000 yards (75 pounds of 18 counts). 800,000 yards he has presented to the Congress and the rest he intends weaving himself. And all this work over and above the regular work of four or five hours a day at school! In a special note on this in the *Nava-jivan* Gandhiji says :

“It is no ordinary thing to spin nearly 12 lakhs of yards of yarn in 12 months. It means nearly 3500 yards a day, which again means eight to nine hours’ a day at the wheel, assuming the speed to be 400 yards *every* hour. Devoted work at the wheel for one year and for such length of time must be regarded as a *Maha-Yagna* (great sacrifice). ‘I am a seeker after self realisation’, says Mr. Zaverbhai Patel, and I would give anything in the world for the sake of it.’ He has my hearty congratulations on the pursuit of this selfless object, and I wish he will be able to keep up his *Yagna*. Let his *Yagna* be a beacon to us, and let it spur us to do at least a half hourly sacrificial spinning every day.”

M. D.

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18th March, 1926

## THE NATIONAL WEEK

BY M. K. GANDHI

The 6th and the 13th of April are never-to-be-forgotten days in our national life. The 6th of April, 1919 witnessed an unparalleled demonstration in which Hindus, Mussalmans and

others joined freely. It was too a day of freedom for the suppressed classes. That day laid the foundation for true Swadeshi. And it was the day when the whole country offered Civil Disobedience. The spirit of mass freedom and mass resistance was abroad.

The 13th April witnessed the Jallianwala Massacre in which Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood mingled in one scarlet stream. A dungheap was turned in a day into a place of political pilgrimage for all India. It will remain that till India lives. Since that day many events have happened. Hope rose high in 1921 to be dashed seemingly to pieces the very moment it rose to the highest point. The tide has appeared to be ebbing ever since. We are passing through midnight gloom. Possibly we have not yet seen that worst.

But that sacred week is still our hope and therefore we must celebrate it even though we are rent in twain and the Government safely flouts national demands, be they ever so pressing and withal reasonable.

There is no perpetual night on God's earth. Ours too will have its ending. Only we must work for it. How to celebrate the week then? Not by Hartal. Not yet by Civil Disobedience. We cannot proclaim or celebrate the unity of Hindus and Non-Hindus, for we Hindus and Mussalmans distrust one another and seek to consolidate our strength and power rather through the Government favour than through mutual forbearance and help. That question must therefore for the time being be left to work itself out. Untouchability is slowly but surely dying. Khaddar alone lends itself to mass demonstration and mass effort. It is the platform on which all can work hand in hand Sales can be organised. Voluntary spinning can be pushed. Collections can be made for All India Das Memorial Fund whose sole object is the promotion of the spinning wheel and Khaddar. There are no doubt many other ways of celebrating the national week. It is open to local workers to devise various ways. I can only think of things in which millions can take part, which remind us of those seven days and which can promote Swaraj.

I can think of nothing else that satisfies all the conditions so well as the spinning wheel.

Oh, that we can do one thing truly and well! It will restore lost self-confidence and it will give us a strength that can carry all before it. The spinning-wheel is the one thing which men, women, boys and girls of all classes and religions can work. It is the one thing that can establish a link between the rich and the poor and it is the one thing that can bring a ray of sunshine into the dark and dilapidated dungeon of the half-starved peasantry. Let those who have faith in the wheel work to make Khaddar more popular during the national week.

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*18th March, 1926*

## SPINNING IN MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

BY M. K. GANDHI

In reply to the circular letter of the Joint Secretary of the All India Spinners' Association asking various Municipalities and District Boards to supply him with the progress made by hand-spinning in their schools, three letters have been so far received. One is from the Chairman, School Board, Ahmedabad Municipality. It is stated that "two experts to train up spinning teachers for Municipal Girls' Schools were employed last year. The teachers underwent training for 6 months and it is now intended to introduce spinning as a compulsory subject in the Municipal Girls' Schools." The Vice-Chairman of the Shahabad District Board says that 8 primary schools had spinning introduced in 1925. Eight teachers of selected schools had special training in spinning and five wheels were supplied to each school. 139 boys of ages varying from 10 to 15 are now receiving instruction. The letter adds that 'the work has been hitherto poor but better results are expected because the work has now become more systematised.' The Board had spent upto 31st January last Rs. 274 out of Rs. 1,000 specially granted. According to the letter of the District Board of Basti, "15 boys spin regularly. 15

Charkhas are at work. The average daily output is only one chatak (.5 tolas); the yarn has been used for weaving *daris*; only two have been completed and they are used in the school. Monthly expense is Rs. 20 being the salary of the teacher. The materials have cost up to now Rs. 81-2-0."

I trust that the other school Boards, if they have introduced hand-spinning in their curricula, will furnish information about whatever progress spinning might have made in their schools. I have already remarked in these pages that experience has shown that for school spinning, the *Takli* is the most convenient and the most profitable implement for spinning. The teachers, for one thing, are able to control the *Takli* spinning of hundreds of boys and girls at a time. This is impossible with the spinning wheel.

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*25th March, 1926*

HE WON'T SPIN

BY M. K. GANDHI

"Before I come to the topic I must say that I am one of those who wear Khadi but never spin. Through your writings in *Young India* you have emphasised that Khadi and the liberation of the untouchables will bring the real salvation of India. While I concur fully as regards Khadi, I am at a loss to understand how the second item will help us in our object in view. I waited a long time thinking that the trouble lies not with the Hindus but the untouchables themselves. I am not troubling you with quotations from our religious books, because they will not solve our problem. First of all you preached that the untouchables should be allowed to move freely. Then you came down with another proposition and that was inter-dining. Now you have got a strange suggestion to make and that is you have advised the untouchables to enter the temples and do the worship of Deity. If orthodoxy opposes, you have advised them to resort to Satyagraha. Very strange indeed of a person who is regarded as a superman—and rightly—that he

should permit such things. The untouchables live outside the villages and towns. They have been long since leading a wretched life and instead of giving them good education and spiritual food, you are going to root out the society by such revolutionary methods. They have always submitted to the law of nature and they are doing their duties very efficiently. If you are to abolish that caste God alone knows what that consequence will be. You charge the Hindus that they are indifferent to the untouchable. You know many of the Hindus think that mere touch will make them unclean. I am to draw your attention to the fact that at the last Communist Conference you refused to attend the same for the simple cause that the Communists formed the out-castes in the eyes of the Government and also of the Congress. That is, you feared pollution. If the Communists were to attack or simply enter the Congress-pandal, you would have called either the volunteers or the Police. Is it not strange that in one case you support the cause of those who are specially unfit to move among the community at large, who by the mere nature of their work forfeited this claim, and opposing those who are simply political rivals and even trying to have any contract with them? If you support the cause of the social untouchables you must also support the cause of political untouchables or leave both to their fate. As I regard you the leader of the people, but mind, not on religious or social matters, but only on matters political and economic, I hope that you will solve the puzzle of my life."

'He wont spin, neither will be toil: If the writer of the above latter had toiled enough to search the pages of *Young India*, he would have discovered that every one of the questions raised by him has been already dealt with. But on the principle that as often as error is repeated truth also must be retold, I hasten for the correspondent's sake and for the sake of those who may think like him to reply to the questions raised by him.

Surely, when Hindus have with a deliberate and conscious

effort, not by way of policy but for self-purification, removed the taint of untouchability, that act will give the nation a new strength born of consciousness of having done the right thing and will therefore contribute to the attainment of Swaraj. We are powerless today because we have lost the power of cohesion. When we learn to regard these five to six crores of outcastes as our own, we shall learn the rudiments of what it is to be one people. That one act of cleansing will probably solve also the Hindu-Muslim question. For in it too the corrosive poison of untouchability is consciously or unconsciously working its way. Hinduism must be poor stuff, if it requires to be protected by an artificial wall of untouchability.

If untouchability and caste are convertible terms, the sooner caste perishes the better for all concerned. But I am satisfied that caste if it is another word for *Varna* is a healthy institution. The modern caste with its arrogant exclusiveness is as good as gone. The innumerable subdivisions are destroying themselves with a rapidity of which we can have no conception.

But let me repeat for the thousandth time that I have not pleaded for interdining nor have I advocated forcible entry into temples. But I have said and I do repeat that temple entry can not be denied to these countrymen of ours. Time for Satyagraha in the matter of temple entry has not yet come.

It is our fault and shame that the suppressed classes are living outside towns and villages and that they are leading a wretched life. Even as we rightly charge the English rulers for our helplessness and lack of initiative and originality, so let us admit the guilt of the high-caste Hindus in making the untouchables what they are today.

The writer seems to admit the necessity of giving these victims of our ignorance and superstition education both mundane and spiritual. How is that to be done unless we freely mix with them on terms of equality? Indeed we need more spiritual training than they do. And the Alpha of our spiritual training must begin by our coming down from our Himalayan height and feeling one with them.

The writer has likened Communists to the Untouchables. This is pure confusion. The Communists are not born. The Untouchables are. Communism is a creed. Untouchability is a disability imposed from without. As for me, I did not avoid the Communists during the Congress week. I saw them freely and had I the time, I would probably have gone to their meeting. They were free to join the Congress on compliance with its constitution. I support the cause of the untouchables because I know that we have done them a grievous wrong. I should support the cause of the Communists, if it commended itself to me.

Lastly, as the correspondent believes in and wears Khaddar, let him demonstrate his full faith by spinning and thus contributing to the output, be it ever so little and linking himself with the teeming millions.

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8th April, 1926

## DOES INDIA WANT PROHIBITION?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Much has been made by the opponents of total prohibition in India of the speech of Mr. King, Financial Commissioner in the Punjab, who was reported to have said that the Local Option Act which was passed over a year ago in the Punjab has been a perfect failure. The Commissioner quotes in support of his statement the following facts :

That out of nearly 200 Municipalities, District Boards etc., only 19 have asked to be empowered under the Act. Of the 19, only 6 took further steps. And in the 6 the *referendum* that was held had precious little support. At Rawalpindi for instance out of 7000 voters, only six registered their votes. At Ludhiana out of 12,500 voters at the first *referendum* not one turned up. A second date was fixed at which only four turned up. Of the other four only in one small town, that of Tohana, out of 1052 voters, 802 voted for total prohibition.

Mr. King argued, as he would be entitled to argue if he



was a stranger to India and Indian conditions, that there was no demand for total prohibition in the Punjab. Unfortunately for India the conditions are that people are apathetic even about things that concern them as a society. The methods adopted for *referendum* are new to them. Probably the voters knew nothing of the fact that there was a *referendum* being taken about total prohibition. Mr. King must have known the fact which every one knows who knows anything of India that the vast majority of the people of India do not drink and that drinking intoxicants is contrary to Islam and Hinduism. The inference therefore to be drawn from the so-called failure referred to by Mr. King is not that the Punjab is against total prohibition but that the Punjabis being themselves as a class teetotalers do not bother their heads about those who are ruining themselves through the drink curse. He is also entitled to draw the inference that the Municipal commissioners and the members of the Local Boards have been criminally negligent of their duties to the voters in this matter of great social importance. But to argue from the facts cited that the Punjab is opposed to total prohibition is to throw dust in the eyes of strangers or ignorant people. That unfortunately is the way of the officials. Instead of looking at things impartially or from the popular standpoint, they constitute themselves pleaders for what the Government stands or for methods which the Government may wish to defend at any cost. It is a well known fact that the Hindus are against the slaughter of the cow and her progeny. Supposing there was a *referendum* taken precisely in the manner in which it was taken in the Punjab regarding drink and the millions of Hindus fail to register their vote, will any one who knows Indian conditions argue therefrom, for one moment, that Hindus want slaughter houses, where the sacred cow is done to death? The fact is that there is not that consciousness created amongst the people that is impatient of social wrongs. It is no doubt a deplorable thing. It is being gradually mended. But it is a wicked thing to suppress facts which would warrant an inference totally different

from the one that may in the absence of those facts, be drawn another set of facts. *As Manchester Guardian* has mildly put it, the case against total prohibition in India is much weaker than the case against it in America or England where respectable people see nothing wrong or harmful in moderate drinking.

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8th April, 1926

### HINDUISM OF TODAY

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent styling himself 'Santani Hindu' writes :

"Hinduism of today presents many a curious anomaly. No one cares to study it, excepting perhaps some European missionaries and officials. Those reputed as the most religious do not follow the Shastras in every detail.

"There is no definite body of doctrines or practices which may be called *sanatana* and should be respected and observed as such. Every Hindu regards his own provincial usage as the *sanatana* usage.

"To take an instance. You insist on the untouchables being given the same status, rights and treatment as the Shoodras enjoy. But do the Shoodras enjoy everywhere the same status? A Shoodra's status in a province where the Brahmanas eat meat or fish, is different from that in a province where the Brahmanas and Vaishnavas alike refrain from meat or fish. You have somewhere said : 'If you have no objection to drinking clean water given by a Shoodra, you should have none to drink it at the hands of an untouchable.' Now some Hindus have religious scurples against having water at the hands of meat-eaters, some against doing so at the hands of beef-eaters. It therefore happens that some Hindus do not take water from Christians, Mussalmans and untouchables alike. Most Shoodras in Gujarat abstain from meat or beef, but not so the so-called untouchables. How is a Hindu to treat the latter on the same basis as the former? I wish you could

call a meeting of the untouchables of the whole province and take promises from them to abstain from beef or carrion as a preliminary to their being taken into the Hindu fold."

The letter presents only one side of the case. There is reason for the correspondent's complaint. But Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay, and subject to the laws of Nature. One and indivisible at the root it has grown into a vast tree with innumerable branches. The changes in the seasons affect it. It has its autumn and summer, its winter and spring. The rains nourish and fructify it too. It is and is not based on scriptures. It does not derive its authority from one book. The *Gita* is universally accepted, but even then it only shows the way. It has hardly any effect on custom. Hinduism is like the Ganges pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficent in its total effect. It takes a provincial form in every province, but the inner substance is retained everywhere. Custom is not religion. Custom may change, but religion will remain unaltered.

Purity of Hinduism depends on the self-restraint of its votaries. Whenever their religion has been in danger, the Hindus have undergone rigorous penance, searched the causes of the danger and devised means for combating them. The *Shastras* are ever growing. The *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Smritis*, *Puranas* and *Itihasas* did not arise at one and the same time. Each grew out of the necessities of particular periods, and therefore they seem to conflict with one another. These books do not enunciate anew the eternal truths but show how these were practised at the time to which the books belong. A practice which was good enough in a particular period would, if blindly repeated in another, land people into the 'slough of despond.' Because the practice of animal sacrifice obtained at one time, shall we revive it today? Because at one time, we used to eat beef, shall we also do so now? Because at one time, we used to chop off the hands and feet of thieves, shall we revive that barbarity today? Shall we revive polyandry? Shall

we revive child-marriages? Because we discarded a section of humanity one day, shall we brand their descendants today as outcastes?

Hindusim abhors stagnation. Knowledge is limitless and so also the application of truth. Every day we add to our knowledge of the power of *Atman*, and we shall keep on doing so. New experience will teach us new duties, but truth shall ever be the same. Who has ever known it in its entirety? The Vedas represent the truth, they are infinite. But who has known them in their entirety? What goes today by the name of the Vedas are not even a millionth part of the real Veda—the Book of Knowledge. And who knows the entire meaning of even the few books that we have? Rather than wade through these infinite complications, our sages taught us to learn one thing: ‘As with the self, so with the Universe.’ It is not possible to scan the universe, as it is to scan the self. Know the self and you know the universe. But even knowledge of the self within presupposes ceaseless striving—not only ceaseless but pure, and pure striving presupposes a pure heart, which in its turn depends on the practice of *yamas*\* and *niyamas*—the cardinal and casual virtues.

This practice is not possible without God’s grace which presupposes Faith and Devotion. This is why Tulsidas sang of the glory of *Ramanama*, that is why the author of the *Bhagawata* taught the *dwadashamantra* (*Om Namoh Bhagwate Vasudevaya*). To my mind he is a *sanatani* Hindu who can repeat this *mantra* from the heart. All else is a bottomless pit, as the sage Akho† has said.

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\**Yamas*, the cardinal virtues, according to *Yogashastra* are *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Satya* (Truth), *Asteya* (Non-stealing) *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy), *Aparigraha* (Non-possession); and the *niyamas* or the casual virtues are, according to the same authority, *Shaucha* (Bodily purity) *Santosha* (Contentment), *Tapa* (forbearance), *Swadhyaya* (Study of Scriptures), *Ishwarapranidhana* (registration to the Will of God).—M. D.

† A poet-seer of Gujarat

But to come to the other part of the letter. The Europeans do study our manners and customs. But theirs is the study of a critic not the study of a devotee. Their 'study' cannot teach me religion.

Boycott of beef-eaters may have been proper in the past. It is improper and impossible today. If you want the so-called untouchables to give up beef, you can do so only by means of love, only by quickening their intellects not by despising them. Non-violent efforts to wean them away from their bad habits are going on, but Hinduism does not consist in eating and not-eating. Its kernel consists in right conduct, in correct observance of truth and non-violence. Many a man eating meat, but observing the cardinal virtues of compassion and truth, and living in the fear of God, is a better Hindu than a hypocrite who abstains from meat. And he whose eyes are opened to the truth of the violence in beef-eating or meat-eating and who has therefore rejected them, who loves 'both man and bird and beast' is worthy of our adoration. He has seen and known God; he is His best devotee. He is the teacher of mankind.

Hinduism and all other religions are being weighed in the balance. Eternal truth is one. God also is one. Let every one of us steer clear of conflicting creeds and customs and follow the straight path of truth. Only then shall we be true Hindus. Many styling themselves *sanatanis* stalk the earth. Who knows how few of them will be chosen by God? God's grace shall descend on those who do His will and wait upon Him, not on those who simply mutter 'Ram Ram.'

(Translated from 'Navajivan' by M. D.)

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15th April, 1926

## PANDIT NEHRU AND KHADDAR.

BY M. K. GANDHI

Pandit Motilalji has never been *persona grata* with the *Times of India*. The latest offence committed by him is that of hawking Khaddar in Allahabad where only a few years ago he could hardly be seen going anywhere except in his grand motor car. But in the elegant language of the writer "Even in India it must be recognised that Pandit Nehru is making an ass of himself." It is to be wished that many leaders will follow Panditji and earn the title that has been so courteously bestowed upon Panditji by the *Times of India*. It is generally time to rejoice when one receives a curse from opponents. Their praises should make one cautious. The Romans feared the Greeks especially when they brought gifts.

The *Times'* writer has out-done himself in showing his contempt for the Congress, Khaddar and Congress-men. I must let the reader to judge for himself. The writer says:

"The completeness of the Congress collapse, the utter futility of the so-called Congress creed, and the total absence among Congress supporters of a single reasonable political idea are illustrated by a telegram despatched in all earnestness from Allahabad."

The writer then proceeds:

"If the British public learnt that Lord Birkenhead, wearing a Union Jack waistcoat, had been selling true blue Tory rosettes beneath the lions in Trafalgar Square, that Mr. Baldwin had been promoting Empire industries by hawking trays of British toys in Piccadilly, that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, attired in corduroys and a muffler had been disposing of red flags among the workers in Limehouse, or that the Clydeside Bolsheviks had set up a stall on Clydeside for the sale of miniature sickles and hammers, the unanimous conclusion of all classes would be that their leaders had gone mad."

The inference naturally is that the distinguished hawkers of Khaddar such as Pandit Nehru and Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar who accompanied him in his hawking have gone mad. The language used by the writer is not only insulting but it is also highly misleading. What possible comparison can there be between "true blue Tory rosettes" hawked by a British Tory and Khaddar which, rightly or wrongly, represents to thousands of Indians an emblem of a real bond between the classes, and the masses? For only by Khaddar the classes through whom the British Government holds sway over the toiling dumb millions, could make some little return to the masses, for the bleeding process which the latter have to undergo in order to feed the British Government. The insult has been possible only because the fashion has been set by the Liberal politicians to be-little Khadi and all it means. Who does not remember that at the time the war broke out young and old, men and women, great and small, in fact all who were not enlisted or could not be enlisted as soldiers, were expected to sew, as a matter of fact did sew, garments for the wounded soldiers who were received in the various hospitals? People at that time vied with one another in doing this little service and those who did not know how to stitch were thankful if they received preliminary training from their neighbours. All distinctions were erased in the face of the awful calamity that had overtaken the British people. I make bold to say that if it was patriotic and necessary for every one to do the sewing and hundreds of other odd jobs which in ordinary life they never did, it is a thousand times necessary and patriotic for every Indian to wear Khaddar to the exclusion of all foreign cloth and thus find the only occupation, that is, of hand spinning, which is possible for the millions of India to undertake.

We read in English books that when a movement is ridiculed by its opponents, it may be said to be making headway and when it excites the anger of their opponents, it is said to be producing the desired effect. If the *Times of India* at all re-

presents British public opinion, Khaddar is evidently producing the desired effect.

The writer of the article in question assures the readers that "the Allahabad public does not want the Congress grave-clothes", as he has called Khaddar, "any more than they are wanted in any other part of India." If so it is difficult to understand all the contempt poured upon Khaddar. But it is for the Congress leaders to prove that Khaddar is not the "grave-clothes" of the Congress but that it establishes an unbreakable link between the Congress and the masses and thus makes the former more representative than it ever has been.

In fairness, however, to Europeans, let me say that in the venomous abuse of Khaddar, the *Times of India* writer by no means represents the general European opinion. I know several Europeans in India who believe in the message of Khaddar and some who use it themselves. Its message has even reached Europe. Here is a letter from a professor from far-off Poland regarding Khaddar:

"Do you not think it would be a good thing if an attempt were made to sell Indian tissues in Europe to friends of India? I might try on a small scale here if you send me tissues of your cloth with the indication of prices in English currency and an English address to which the money could be sent. I think that even if the amount of sales would not be very great, it would be useful for propaganda and I hope that many people at least in Poland would be proud and happy to wear Indian cloth in order to show their sympathy with your work..... This is perhaps the most efficient way to gain universal sympathy for the emancipation of India. I could not easily undertake to spin myself but I can undertake to go from house to house and encourage the buying of Indian cloth even if it is more expensive than our own products."

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*15th April, 1926***'THE MORALS OF MACHINERY'**

*The Current Thought*\* for February has reproduced Mr. Richard B. Gregg's letter to a friend on the 'Morals of Machinery' Mr. Gregg is an ex-American lawyer with a wide experience of his own country. He has lived in the midst of the very things he describes in his letter and has at one time in his life contributed to their growth. He therefore writes with authority.

"Most people" he says, "accept mechanism for its immediate results and are quite blind to the secondary results of slower growth. But these latter are the most important." He then recounts in detail the evils of multiplication of machinery. He puts enormous concentration of material power and wealth in the hands of the few first in the list. "Machinery and modern industry" Mr. Gregg truly says, "have taken the money of millions of people and concentrated its management and control into relatively few hands and modern development of banking and credit have concentrated the control of all the materials and factories and mills into still fewer hands. "Do we not see the process going on even in our own country at the cost of the millions who are being bled white in order to support huge industries thousands of miles away from their cottages?" "Probably" says Mr. Gregg, "the real ultimate control of industry in Europe, America and most of Asia and Africa is concentrated in the hands of not over 1500 men, perhaps fewer still."

"Such tremendous powers is a temptation which human nature cannot withstand. It involves tyranny, vanity, pride, greed; selfishness, ruthlessness, competition on the one side, loss of liberty, insecurity, fears, loss of self-reliance and of independence, degradation, poverty, loss of dignity and self-respect on the other.

"Deaths, maiming and crippling by industrial accidents far

\* Publisher: S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras.

exceed corresponding injuries by war. Diseases and physical deterioration caused directly and indirectly by modern industry are appalling. For, it is industry that has caused the development of large cities with their smoke, dirt, noise, bad air, lack of sunshine, and out-door life, slums, disease, prostitution, and unnatural living."

The waste in advertisements is truly 'appalling.' "The President of the British Incorporated Society of Advertisement Consultants recently estimated that the annual expenditure on advertisements for the British Isles alone is £ 175,000,000."!!!

Another striking feature is 'parasitism.' "Man is made to obey the machine. The wealthy and middle classes become helpless and parasitic upon the working classes. And the latter become so specialised that they also become helpless. The ordinary city dweller cannot make his own clothing or produce or prepare his own food. The cities become parasitic upon the country. Industrial nations upon agricultural nations. Those who live in temperate climates are increasingly parasitic upon tropical peoples, Governments upon the peoples they govern, Armies upon civilians. People even become parasitic and passive in regard to their recreation and amusements. They want to *be* amused, instead of amusing themselves. They throng the cinemas and theatres and music halls. They watch others play cricket etc."

"Along with this parasitism has come a widespread irresponsibility. The industrial 'magnate' or banker issues an order in Europe which affects vitally the lives of negroes in Central Africa."

The consumers, too, fare no better. They too cease to feel the responsibility. "When I," exclaims Mr. Gregg, "seated in a restaurant in France, put some pepper in my soup, do I stop to think what poor coolie in Java, perchance, endured the hardship of gathering it, while subject to a fever, and perhaps to the indignities and brutality of harsh plantation supervision?"

I must however resist the temptation to quote more from this instructive letter. I must ask the reader to see the original

if the samples I have put before him have whetted his appetite for more. The reader must not think that Mr. Gregg is against all machinery. He is against its uncontrolled multiplication. He would regulate and restrain its use as we regulate or ought to regulate and curb our passions. That use of machinery is lawful which subserves the interests of all.

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*15th April, 1926*

### THE NATIONAL WEEK AT SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

The way in which the National Week was celebrated at Satyagraha Ashram deserves special notice for the unique zeal with which one and all put their best effort to render the week one of the greatest amount of work and prayer in the whole year. Measures were concerted in the previous week as to how best to celebrate it. It was decided not to disturb the Ashram routine in any way, the morning and evening common prayers and the special morning prayer for the school children continuing as usual, all fasting on the 6th and 13th, all doing their allotted task (excepting the children for whom the school was closed), and yet putting forth an extra effort to make the week of a distinctively national character. With this end in view, five groups decided in their respective quarters to work the spinning wheels day and night, from 4 A. M. on the 6th to 7 P. M. on the 13th, the rest working their own wheels and also working a loom day and night from the morning of the 6th to the evening of the 13th.

An analysis of the result shows the unprecedented success with which God has blessed our effort. The wheels and the loom worked away day and night, without for a moment going wrong, or stopping, and without any one who attended to them at nights ever falling ill. Especial enthusiasm was evoked on the day when a youngster of 16 one day worked at his wheel for 14 hours and registered his yarn score in the evening. It was 4444 rounds or 5925 yards ! That spurred others to emulating his exploit with

the result that there were five more champions who entered the lists, the most successful of them scoring as many as 9119 rounds (i. e., over 12,160 yards) of 17 counts, having been at his wheel for 22 hours and 30 minutes at a stretch, spinning at a sustained speed of 540 yards an hour!

But the pioneer was not to be balked of the fruits of his first unique achievement. He did on the last day 7000 rounds thus topping the list in the whole week's total individual outturn, his score being 17,244 rounds or 22,992 yards that is nearly 3000 yards per day!

Though I have said above that the boys had a holiday so far as the school was concerned, it was no holiday from the point of view of work, for all the time that they did not spin they gave to cleaning, ginning, carding and slivering the cotton that they and their elders turned into yarn during the day.

But to return to the analysis.

For the purpose of comparison, I give this week's figures with the figures of spinning in an ordinary week :

#### AN ORDINARY WEEK THE EXTRAORDINARY WEEK

In rounds Daily Average			In rounds Daily Average		
Men	1,02,042	281	1,87,457	480	
Women	54,288	295	1,51,114	638	
School.					
children	50,602	264	2,37,010	1087	
Infants	11,102	160	35,274	349	
Total 2,18,034			6,10,845		
General Average		271		644	
outturn per head					

I also give below the result of the last day's spurt :

#### ROUNDS AVERAGE

Men	44,493	840	Day's }	1,43,898
Women	27,488	887	Total }	
School			Average }	
Children	65,485	2339	Per Head }	1,170
Infants	6,432	585		

The result of the day and night working of one loom, 5 men and women sitting at it in turns, was as below :

Total hours of work	180
Total persons	40
Total outturn	190 yards of 21" width

I now proceed to give interesting items from the figures already analysed :

#### HIGHEST WEEKLY SCORE

	Rounds
From men : Keshu	17,135
„ Women : Krishnamaiya	10,200
„ School children : Kanti	17,244
„ Infants ; Anandi	7,281

The oldest members of the Ashram viz. Gandhiji and Kasturibai Gandhi scored a total of 3,829 and 4,226 rounds respectively, and the youngest—a grand-daughter of the oldest—scored 4,323 rounds.

Out of 57 men *three* scored a total of over ten thousand and *three* of over 5000 rounds ; out of 32 women *one* scored a total of over ten thousand and *eleven* of over five thousand and out of 29 school children *eight* scored over ten thousand and *fourteen* over five thousand.

#### THE HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL EFFORT OF A DAY :

	Rounds	Hours
Keshu	9,119	22½
Krishna	7,285	20½
Somabhai	7,225	21
Karti	7,000	20
Keshavlal	5,100	18
Navin	4,400	16

From the total number of 133 inmates, 18 (exclusive of the six mentioned above) scored a daily outturn of from two to three thousand rounds.

M. D.

22nd April, 1926

## DRUGS, DRINK AND DEVIL.

BY M. K. GANDHI

Drugs and drink are the two arms of the devil with which he strikes his helpless slaves into stupefaction and intoxication. And according to an illuminating article in *The Survey* and the two Opium Conferences at Geneva, opium, the chief among the drugs, 'won'. The writer says; Out of all the marching and counter-marching, the drawing of swords and putting up them again the rumours of defeats and famous victories, the traffic in opium and other narcotic drugs has gained a new lease of life." In the midst of confusion and chaos caused by the bewildering reports on behalf of the different nations, the writer says: "The only people concerned who knew precisely what, they wanted and did not want, and who were quite clear about and content with what they got, were those who in one way or another make profit out of the traffic in narcotics." "Especially during the world war," the writer adds, "the campaign has been going almost by default. In that five years of turmoil, so far as international interest or action was concerned the war against narcotics took its place with the war against original Sin.....Indeed, the war itself materially aggravated the evil. The widespread use of morphine and cocaine in the armies as anodynes against human agony, and to some extent as a means of mental relief from the deadly despairs and fears, disgusts and monotones of war, turned loose at the end in many countries a considerable army of uncured and more or less incurable addicts to continue and spread their addiction. For, one of the awful concomitants of this vice is a kind of perverted missionary impulse to propagate itself by making new addicts."

This is one of the most deadly by-products of the late war. If it has destroyed millions of lives, it has also hastened the soul-deadening process. But Mr. Gavit, the writer, shows that

during the thirteen years since the Inter-national agreement was registered in the Hague Convention "the character of the problem has changed greatly." Mr. Gavit can only speak from the European stand-point. Therefore, he says, "the evil is no longer an exotic affair of the Far East, of the eating, drinking and smoking of the raw and prepared opium after the time-entrenched fashions of India, China and other Oriental regions." It has now resolved itself into the use "of the more concentrated and far more injurious forms in the *high power drugs*, manufactured in the expensively equipped and scientifically-operated pharmaceutical laboratories of the lands which call themselves "civilized". Whereas in the former time the opium and the opium-habits of the Far East were creeping out into the West, now the flow is the other way. And that is not all: these drugs are equally deadly, and spreading ominously, in the countries where they are made, and across their borders to their neighbours.....The threat is against the welfare of all mankind. To this devil a white addict is as useful as a black, or yellow;...His is a domain upon which the sun never sets."

The writer then touches 'the heart of the evil' which is in 'the *excess of production*' beyond the very legitimate needs of medicine and science. "These needs *per capita* are:

Raw opium, 450 milligrams (about 7 grains)

Cocaine, 7 milligrams (about 11 of a grain)

This works out for a population of 744,00,0000 (out of the world's assumed total of 1,747,000,000) as accessible to Western-trained medical service, to a total "medical and scientific" need *in tons* about as follows:

For medicinal opium	100 tons.
" morphine	136 "
" Codein	84 "
" Heroin	15 "
Total world need.	<hr/> 336 tons."

.....Of cocaine, at the rate mentioned the requirements would be a little over 12 tons. But the total output at the very lowest is 8,600 tons. Of cocaine there are no ascertainable figures but it is nowhere under 100 tons. Thus the world's production of narcotics is more than ten times the most extravagant estimate of the world's legitimate needs."

The writer shows that none of the great powers including America and Great Britain has seriously tackled the problem. He charges them with having broken the promise made under Article 9 of the Hague Convention—"to limit the manufacture of these substances to the *bona fide* needs of medicine and science." He deplores that these civilized nations have failed not merely to check the over-production of raw and prepared opium but have failed to check even the manufacture of the deadly drugs in the huge laboratories which are subject to license and inspection and whose control is the easiest thing possible if there is only the will.

The readers who have studied the Assam Opium report prepared at the instance of the Congress by Mr. Andrews' labours know the evil wrought by the opium habit. They also know how the Government has failed egregiously to deal with the growing evil and how they have thwarted the efforts of reformers who tried to deal with it. It therefore did one's soul good to find that during the National Week speakers at public meetings, insisted upon the total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs. It is a reform that is overdue. And, if it is at all worth going to the Councils, this total prohibition must be made a prominent plank in the electoral campaign. Every member must be pledged not merely to support but to initiate and pursue the total prohibition campaign, the only way to bring about total prohibition, being to cut out from the military expenditure a portion equivalent to the revenue derived from this immoral source. The demand therefore for total prohibition must go hand in hand with the demand for reduction in the military expenditure. Nor must the solution be delayed by plans of taking referendums. In India there can be no reason



for any referendum because drink and drug habit are universally recognised as a vice. Drink is not a fashion in India as it is in the West. To talk therefore of a referendum in India is to trifle with the problem.

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*22nd April, 1926*

### FOR AND AGAINST KHADI

AGAINST KHADI:—A correspondent writes a Gujarati letter of which the following is a free rendering :

"I am a stenographer. I applied in reply to an advertisement by a well-known European firm for the post of a stenographer at its office and I received a reply asking me to report myself at their office. As soon as I was ushered in the presence of the manager, he scanned my dress and seeing that it was all pure Khadi said, 'You are no use. Don't you know that those who wear Khadi dress need not expect any employment in European firms?' And with this he dismissed me leaving me to wonder what connection my dress had with my ability to take down correct notes. I returned home feeling thankful that I had the courage to withstand the temptation of giving up my Khadi dress for the sake of a comfortable employment. I hope that God will sustain that courage and that even when I am sorely tried, I shall not give up Khadi which I know binds me to the poor of the land. I send you this information in order that it may serve as a warning to others against relying upon getting employment in European firms except on humiliating terms."

I congratulate the young stenographer upon his self-sacrifice and join my hope with his that God will sustain his courage even though he might have a series of disappointments when he tries to get employed as a stenographer.

FOR KHADI:—But all European employers are not cast in the same mould. When I was in Calcutta last year, I came in touch with many European merchants and some of the

leading ones amongst them not only had no objection to their employees wearing Khadi dress but they avowed sympathy with the Khadi movement and appreciated the sentiment that requires Indians and, indeed, those who make fortunes in India, to use cloth spun and woven by the toiling millions. Here is a letter from an Indian employee which the readers of *Young India* will read with pleasure:—

“I am an ordinary employee of a European firm in Bombay, which firm I joined in 1918. Being a stenographer I have always been in close touch with my European officer. In the year 1920 I was drawn towards the Gandhi cult and the Non-co-operation movement which was then spreading the country and I could feel the slow and steady change that my mind was undergoing till in 1921 I became a convinced non-co-operator. Placed as I was, I found the only way in which I could satisfy my thirst for the uplift of the country and the righting of my country's wrongs was through Khaddar. No other practical step could be found. Driven from my village in Southern India by poverty in search of fortune elsewhere, I had just entered a life of contentment in the sense that I was getting enough to carry on and put by something for my old age, and a fierce struggle now ensued within me, the mind bringing prominently in view the danger of losing the appointment through the displeasure of my European officer at my wearing Khaddar and the heart pointing to my duty to the country and the poor. Thanks to the then atmosphere of India which was saturated with the spirit of sacrifice, courage and self-respect, I felt ashamed within me that I should not have the courage to use the cloth manufactured by my starving brothers and sisters. My spirit began to revolt against my baser self and on a happy day I put on a Khadi coat and entered, my office trembling within and reasoning within myself that I would rather risk it than be a slave bound down without a chain. I sat at my desk and in a few minutes my officer entered and took his seat just 4 feet from my table. I wished him ‘Good Morning’ full of fear, not looking straight in his

face but slyly observing whether he was noting the change in my dress. Soon I was called to his side and my eyes were secretly observing his features when I was taking notes from him. I spent the whole day ill at ease, struggling with my cowardice within, and you can imagine my surprise when I found at the end of the day that he seemed not to care at all for my dress which could at first sight be recognised as khaddar. Then I concluded that my officer was really good and being already attached to me could not entertain any bad feeling on the score of Khaddar. Slowly therefore I picked up courage and began to dress myself in full khaddar. My joy knew no bounds. The immediate effect of all this was that I began to take pride in national dress and ever after have been attending office in my national costume. There was still another disillusionment awaiting me. I thought, justly or unjustly that my superiors did not object to my dress because they did not want to face the scandal that would assuredly follow my dismissal on this score but that they would show their displeasure in action by refusing to give me any promotion thereafter. Experience taught me that this was also wrong for they did give me increases, but then I thought they were giving me small increases and if I had not taken this step they would have given me more encouragement. Then a higher post fell vacant which I could very well fill, but I felt shy and thought that my simple national dress would not be liked by the officer in whose gift the appointment was, as being a big and influential man himself he would have many illustrious visitors and he might consider it below his dignity or prestige to have a Gandhi man (as some would call it) by his side as an assistant. I therefore never entertained any hopes of being promoted to that place and felt contented thinking that so long as they did not interfere with my way of life I should not much care for any promotion on conditions of slavery. A month passed, some outsiders were tried, and to my surprise at last I was informed that I was to be promoted to that post. God's ways are inscrutable. That which was not aspired or tried for was

offered to me irrespective of my Khadi, knowing of course that I could handle the work satisfactorily. The curious thing is that the higher officer too under whom I now came proved extremely kind and loving never caring for my Khadi dress or Indian fashion. He wants his work done and that is all. When I was promoted, some of my colleagues sincerely thought that I would not be so impertinent as to continue my simple dress in Khaddar and thus lower the prestige of my sahib, and my assurance that I was determined to continue so didn't seem to convince them until some months passed. It is not still unusual for friends to query me as to whether my European officers really tolerate my simple Khadi dress. Two years have passed since I was promoted to my present post and not once have I had occasion to feel that my Khadi has any way impressed my superiors badly. Though I know of cases where European employers have dismissed their servants for wearing Khaddar at the time when it was to them as red rag to the bull, and granting that perhaps in my case luck has played its part over and above the generosity of the particular officers, I cannot but feel that in most cases the fear entertained for using Khadi in European offices is baseless and is like mistaking a rope for a snake. I feel also that had I out of fear refrained from taking to Khadi I would have doubly sinned, firstly for neglecting my duty to the country and secondly for holding wrong and uncharitable notions about the character of my European officers."

I congratulate the European firm upon their breadth of vision for it was no doubt something for them not to be carried away by prejudice when Non-co-operation was at its height and when Khadi dress was mixed up by so many Europeans with violent intentions.

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29th April, 1926

### TOTAL PROHIBITION

A correspondent writes :

"Every since the advent of Non-co-operation movement for the last five or six years steps were continually being taken by the people of these villages—Illur-Kallamadi-Tarimela group, for the permanent closure of intoxicating drink-shops in these villages. It will occupy many columns to trace the history. Suffice it to say that this year it has been notified by the authorities to the great satisfaction of the villages that the arrack shops of these villages have been permanently closed and the names removed from bid-lists.

This information having been received only yesterday today (11th-Maha Sivaratri) the people of this village *i.e.*, Tarimels, went in a procession attended by music and *Bhajan* to all the main temples of the village and offered cocoanuts to Gods. To perpetuate this incident in the memory of the villagers *sherbet* (out of 5 maunds of jaggery) was prepared and served among the villagers. 64 seers of greengram was also cooked and served to the Sudra and other classes of people from 4 O'clock in the evening till late in the night. After this 'Harischandra drama was enacted by the actors of this village."

I congratulate the villagers on the closing of their liquor shops. But if there had been a *referendum* probably very few, as in the Punjab, would have taken the trouble of registering their votes unless there had been personal canvassing. M.K.G.

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## PROHIBITION AND MADRAS GOVERNMENT 773

6th May, 1926

### PROHIBITION AND MADRAS GOVERNMENT

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachar has unearthed a Government order which is simplicity itself but which conveys a world of meaning. In a note accompanying a copy of the order Sjt. Rajagopalachar writes to the press:

“Among the many post-Reform additions to our recurring charges are the new Health Officers and their Staff. They are expected to educate the people about cholera, malaria etc.”

Some of the members of the staff seem to have enquired whether they should carry on propaganda against the drink habit also and the laconic reply received was:

“The Government consider that the Public Health Staff should not carry on anti-drink propaganda”

It is to be noted here that there is no reason assigned for the ban on anti-drink propaganda. On the contrary, one would expect explicit instructions to these conservators of health to instruct the people about the evil effects of drink on the body under a popular Government. They would be required to tell the people how deadly the effect of alcohol is upon the human body and show by magic lantern slides in a graphic manner the ruin that alcohol brings wherever it finds a place. But it is madness to expect the existing Government to do any such thing. One may as well expect the keeper of a public house to warn its visitors against running into the death-trap. Is not the Government the keeper of all the public houses of India? It is the 35 crores revenue that enables us to give University education to our children. It enables the Government to impose *pax Britannica* upon us. Not till the people realise their duty and develop strength to resist the Government in its pro-drink policy will it be possible to have a dry India.

### PROHIBITION IN AMERICA

One hears so much about prohibition being a failure in America that it is refreshing to find references which prove

the contrary. The cuttings that a correspondent has sent show that delegates to the Middle-West Students' Conference representing 123 thousand college students in the South-East and Middle-West of America passed resolutions opposing liquor drinking by students.

The February issue of the journal of the 'Locomotive Engineers' contains the following:

"The railroad brotherhoods as well as hundreds of thousands of sober, industrious workingmen in the America Federation of Labour, are opposed to drink because they know it never made any man a better citizen, a better worker, or a better husband or father. We do not believe the remarkable growth of labour co-operating banks in this country would have been possible if the workingmen were still putting their savings over the bar. We are further convinced that the progress of the American labour movement depends upon leaders with clear, cool heads and not upon those whose brains are addled by alcohol. Perhaps it is worth noting that the leaders of British labour, who have made much substantial progress economically, and politically, since the war, are overwhelmingly dry."

"The progress made by industry in the United States during the last five years toward the elimination of waste has brought about 'one of the most astonishing transformations in economic history.'"

It is not my purpose to make the reader believe that prohibition in America has been wholly successful, I have read enough literature on the gigantic experiment to know that there is another side to the picture. But allowing for all the exaggerations on either side, there is little doubt that prohibition has been a great boon to that wonderful people. It is yet too early to state results with certainty. The problem is much simpler in India, if only we have all the bars and distilleries closed.

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*13th May, 1926*

## A DIEHARD

BY M. K. GANDHI

Prejudices die hard. Though the atrocious injustice done by the Hindus to the suppressed classes is admitted generally by even the orthodox Hindu society, there are men, otherwise injustice in the liberal-minded, so blinded by prejudice that they see no treatment meted out to our suppressed countrymen. Thus a correspondent writes :

"I am a very humble follower of yours though I do not claim to belong to the front rank. On the untouchability question I am sorry to confess that I do not feel as strongly as you do. I do not agree with people who say that the untouchables are oppressed and suppressed. I feel it my duty to submit to you that the so-called untouchables have been enjoying their freedom and were well off before. If I survey the past and the present of the Panchamas, I cannot well congratulate them upon their consciousness because it has taken them nowhere. The thirst after the so-called education and for the loaves and fishes of office is being copied by them only to make them worse helots. Any man who abandons manual labour and takes up office or service always changes for the worse. That has been the painful experience of us Brahmins. I well remember the day when the Panchama was considered to be one of the members of the family, he being provided every month for his maintenance and clothing. But all this is now gone. Most of the untouchables have either migrated to the other parts of the world to slave under foreigners or have become an unconscious tool of the bureaucracy to serve the military for the princely salary of Rs. 15. I am afraid that your mission to elevate them, to place them on an equal footing with other communities of the country, is doomed to failure. Personally, though I feel that much should be done to elevate them socially it cannot be done as if by magic in a single day. Millions of



money will have to be spent to educate them, to free them from economic distress, to persuade them to abandon the vices of drinking and killing cows and eating dead animals which have been their age-long custom and which were alone mainly responsible for confining them to a corner in each and every village. If this is not done and if the other classes are asked to embrace the untouchables, it will be a degradation of society which I do not think you would like."

Degradation lies in not touching the 'untouchable.' What though a man drinks, kills cows and eats carrion? He is no doubt an evil-doer though no greater than the one who commits secret and more deadly sins. But he is not to be treated as an untouchable even as society does not treat the secret sinner as one. Sinners are not to be despised, but pitied and helped to rid themselves of their sinfulness. The existence of untouchability among Hindus is a denial of the doctrine of *Ahimsa* on which we pride ourselves. We are responsible for the evils among the 'untouchables' of which the writer complains. What have we done to wean them from their ways? Do we not spend a fortune to reform members of our own families? Are the untouchables not members of the great Hindu family? Indeed, Hinduism teaches us to regard the whole of humanity as one indivisible and undivided family and holds each one of us responsible for the misdeeds of all. But if it is not possible to act up to the grand doctrine for its vastness, let us at least understand the unity of the 'untouchables' with us since we regard them as Hindus.

And what is worse, eating carrion or thinking carrion? We daily create, harbour and nourish millions of untouchable thoughts. Let us shed them, for they are the true untouchables deserving to be hated and cast out. And let us do penance for our past injustice towards the 'untouchable' brothers by lovingly embracing them. The correspondent does not question the duty of serving the untouchables. How are we to serve them if their very sight offends and pollutes us?

*20th May, 1926*

## MY KAMADHENU

BY M. K. GANDHI

I know that I have been ridiculed by some people for calling the spinning wheel a gateway to my salvation. But even so may, a person who makes himself a little ball of clay, gives to it the imposing name of Parthiweshwar Chintamani and concentrates on it all the faculties of his being in the hope of 'seeing God face to face' by that means, be sneered at by those who do not share his faith in the life-giving power of his image. But would he, madly bent as he is on attaining self-realisation, give up his worship on this account? No. On the contrary he will strive on without flagging till success crowns his efforts, as in the end it must, while his detractors will only be the worse off for their gibes. Similarly, if my conception of the spinning wheel comes from a pure heart, it will become to me the means of my salvation. A faithful Hindu's ears will automatically turn to the direction where *Ramanama* is being repeated, and for the time being all the evil passions will subside in him. What does it matter if the repetition of that divine name fail to produce any impression on others? A Hindu may not be in the least affected by the cry of *Alla ho Akbar*, but a Mussalman is roused by it. Similarly, a pious Englishman, the moment he is reminded of the presence within him of God, will be able to restrain his passions and compose himself for the time being. As is the spirit behind worship, so is the fruit thereof.

It follows then that even if the spinning wheel be in itself nothing, and the virtues that I have attributed to it exists only in my imagination, it will still prove at least to me my Kamedhenu, i. e., Cow of Plenty. I think of the poor of India every time that I draw a thread on the wheel. The poor of India to-day have lost faith in God, more so in the middle classes or the rich. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger,

and desiring nothing but to fill his belly, his belly is his God. To him any one who gives him bread is his Master. Through him he may even see God. To give alms to such persons, who are sound in all their limbs, is to debase oneself and them. What they need is some kind of occupation, and the occupation that will give employment to millions can only be hand-spinning. But I can instill my faith in the potency of hand-spinning in the minds of the toilers of India not by making speeches but only by spinning myself. Therefore, I have described my spinning as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also, I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning wheel.

#### WHY SHOULD YOU SPIN ?

So much for my conception of the spinning wheel. If you can accept my view-point then nothing more remains to be desired. But it is likely that it may not be acceptable to you. Even then there is a host of reasons why you should spin. I give below only a few of them.

- 1. You can make others spin only if you spin yourself.
2. You can, by yourself spinning and giving your yarn to the All-India Spinners' Association, in the end help to make possible a reduction in the prices of Khadi.
3. By learning to spin, you can now or at any future time, whenever you may wish, help the propaganda of spinning. Experience has shown that those who are ignorant even of the alpha and omega of the art of spinning, are of no use for such work.
4. If you will yourself spin, the quality of spinning will improve. Those who spin for wages must naturally be impatient. They will continue to spin the count that they are accustomed to. The task of improving the count of yarn essentially belongs to the research worker, the lover of spinning. This has been proved by experience. If there had not arisen a class of spinners,—including both men and women,—who spin purely out of a spirit of service, the amazing progress that has

been achieved in the quality of yarn would not have been possible.

5. If you spin, your talents can be utilised in effecting improvements that have been made in the mechanism of the spinning wheel. All the improvements that have been made in the mechanism of the spinning wheel and the speed of spinning up till now are solely due to the efforts of those devoted workers who spin for sacrifice.

6. The ancient art of India is to-day gradually suffering extension. Its revival to a very large extent depends on the revival of handspinning. That there is art in spinning, those who have practised it as a sacrament know well enough. During the Satyagraha Week, the spinners would not tire of spinning at all. Of course, one of the reasons why they did not feel any weariness was certainly the spirit in which they had undertaken it. But, if there were no art in spinning, if there were no music in it, it would have become impossible for those young men who spin for twenty-two and a half hours out of twenty-four. It should be borne in mind in this connection that these spinners were not induced to the effort by hope of gaining any prize. The spinning was its own reward.

7. In our country manual labour is regarded as a low occupation. Our poets have gone so far as to describe the happy rich as never having to touch mother earth at all, so much so that hair begins to grow on the soles of their feet! Thus the highest function (body labour) to which a man is born and with which, the sages tell us, Brahman created him, we have in fact looked down upon as something mean and degrading. We should spin therefore if only to guard against the pernicious tendency of regarding the toilers as being low in the social scale. Spinning is therefore as obligatory on the prince as on the peasant.

#### TO THE JUVENILES

All the foregoing reasons apply to you irrespective of the sex to which you belong. But there are some additional reasons

why you in particular should spin. It is to these that I now want to draw your attention :

1. How nice it would be for you to labour for the poor from your childhood : spinning will nourish your sense of philanthropy in the right way.

2. If you do your spinning at a fixed time every day you will develop in you the sense of regularity. For, if you are regular in spinning, you will try to be regular in other things also. and it is the universal experience that a boy with regular habits does twice the amount of work than a boy does who works irregularly.

3. It will develop your sense of tidiness ; for without tidiness, good yarn cannot be spun at all. You will have to keep your slivers clean, your hands likewise clean and free from perspiration. You will have to see also that the place around you is free from dust etc. After spinning you will have to wind your yarn tidily on the winding frame, then carefully spray it and finally make it into a neat fine hank.

4. It will enable you to learn how to effect repairs in a simple machine. Ordinarily boys and girls of India are not given this training. If you are lazy and get your servant or some older relative to clean your wheel for you, you will miss this training ; but I have taken it for granted that every child who sends or will send his yarn to the All-India Spinners' Association is fond of his wheel. Besides, a boy who does his spinning with interest will master all the details about the various parts of his spinning wheel. A carpenter always cleans his own tools. And, just as a carpenter who does not know how to clean his own tools, can hardly be ranked as a carpenter ; similarly, a boy who cannot prepare his own *mal* (winding string), make his own *sari* (composition applied to the spindle where the *mal* touches it) or prepare his spindle-holders, can hardly be called a spinner ; he is only the travesty of a spinner.

(From the *Navajivan* by M. D.)

27th of May, 1926

## THE COBWEBS OF IGNORANCE

BY M. K. GANDHI

An English writer has observed that in vindicating truth there is far more labour in disentangling the knots of ignorance than in propounding the truth itself. Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear. That is just the sort of handicap under which the simple and straight movement of the spinning wheel is labouring to-day. It is expected to fulfil conditions which no one ever claimed it to fulfil, and when it fails to do so, the blame is laid at its door rather than at the critic's! A capital illustration of this is afforded by some paragraphs sent by a lover of Khadi, the substance of which is :

"(1) Now that you have begun to claim the spinning wheel as a universal provider, it has simply filled us with disgust. And, so, to-day, we, the intelligentsia, repudiate you and your spinning wheel alike.

"(2) It may be possible to introduce hand spinning in small villages and if you confined yourself simply to that, nobody would criticise you and you might even get some sympathy.

"(3) But when you try to make out that even spiritual salvation can come through the spinning wheel you make yourself ridiculous. But you being a 'great' man, it is just possible that some simple-minded people may swallow whatever you say. The educated are not going to stand your nonsense any more; because you have now cast all moderation to the winds, and particularly since your voluntary retirement, you have not hesitated to prescribe the spinning wheel to everybody and for every conceivable object under heaven. Does one want to observe *Brahmacharya*? Let him take to the spinning wheel. Do you want to secure the release of the innocent Bengal

patriots who are in jail? Ply the wheel. Do you want to ameliorate the economic condition of India? Why then, the wheel again! Not only this, you have even offered the spinning wheel to veteran soldiers fit to wield the sword and the spear. The wonder is that you do not perceive the utter madness of all this.

“(4) What would it matter to Britain if India ceased to purchase sixty crore rupees worth of cloth from her? Do you suppose that that would make her abdicate her political power in India? See, how woefully mistaken you are in declaring that there is no political programme more valuable than hand-spinning.

“(5) You have yet to prove that the spinning wheel can solve even the bread problem for the masses. The harm that has resulted from it, on the other hand, is quite apparent. Just think of the Khadi shops that have come to grief already!

“(6) You even seem to suggest that other industrial activities should be dropped for the sake of hand-spinning.”

I have condensed the objections in my own words. I do not think that I have thereby done the writer any injustice. On the contrary, I have erred, if at all, in removing or toning down the bitterness of his writing. An embittered patriot has a right to employ harsh language towards a person who has come to be dubbed a ‘Mahatma’. For it enables him to mollify, to some extent at least, his rising anger over the spectacle of destitution that his country presents on the one hand and its utter helplessness to remedy it on the other. My duty is not to advertise his anger but to try, if it is at all possible, to remove the confusion engendered by that anger.

To proceed now to the examination of the six points of the correspondent:

#### A UNIVERSAL PROVIDER

(1) I have never tried to make any one regard the spinning wheel as his *Kamadhenu* or universal provider; I have certainly regarded it as *my Kamadhenu* and in this I have done

nothing more than what crores of Hindus in India are to-day doing, when they take up a little bit of clay, mould it into a small oval ball, mentally invest it with the Divine presence and make it their *Kamadhenu* by offering up their entire being to it. They do not ask their neighbours to worship it; on the contrary after their worship is over, they consign that sacred ball of clay to the waters. Why should then the intelligentsia feel disgusted if, with crores of my fellows, I lose my head and make the spinning wheel my *Kamadhenu*? May I not expect a measure of toleration from them? But as a matter of fact the intelligentsia as a body have not given me the go-by yet. To believe or give others believe, therefore, that all the intelligentsia are disgusted because a few are, is hardly proper. But supposing for the time being, that all of them do actually abandon me altogether, then, if my faith is inviolate, as all true faith must be, it will simply blaze forth and burn all the brighter for that reason. When in 1908, on board the *Kildonan Castle*, I declared my faith in the spinning wheel in the pages of the *Hind Swaraj* (*Indian Home Rule*), I stood absolutely alone. Will then, my God who guided my pen into making that declaration of faith at that time, abandon me, when it is put on its trial?

#### SPIN FOR SACRIFICE

(2) It is in the villages only that the spinning wheel is largely meant to be introduced, and it is just there that it is at present going on. And if to-day I beg for sympathy and support, it is for its revival in our villages. Again it is just for this, that I have to canvass the sympathy of the educated class. For, just as if we want to teach our villagers, who are ignorant how to protect themselves against the ravages of malaria and such other diseases, some people from the educated and middle class will first have to become adepts in the knowledge of the sanitary measures necessary to extirpate these diseases and to observe the rules themselves, similarly it is only when some of us learn spinning and practise it ceaselessly ourselves that we shall be able to teach it to our villagers and overcome



their apathy by our personal example. And it goes without saying that unless we use the Khadi that they produce the spinning wheel cannot live. My appeal to the people who live in the cities, therefore, is to spin for sacrifice, while their brethren in the villages do it for reward. The thing is simplicity itself. If only we get at the heart of it, we will find that it hardly affords any room for criticism.

### I SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE

(3) I do regard the spinning wheel as a gateway to *my* spiritual salvation, but I recommend it to others only as a powerful weapon for the attainment of Swaraj and the amelioration of the economic condition of the country. To those also who aspire to observe *Brahmacharya*, I do present the spinning wheel. It is not a thing to be despised for, it is experience here that speaks. A person who wants to subdue his passions has need to be calm. All commotion within him ought to cease; and so quiet and gentle is the motion of the spinning wheel, that it has been known to still the passions of those who have turned it in the fulness of faith. I have been able to compose my anger by turning it, and I can adduce similar testimony of several other Brahmacharis. Of course it would be quite easy to laugh down all such persons as fools and nincom-poops, but it would not be found to be cheap in the end. For the scoffer in a fit of anger, loses a beautiful means wherewith to compose his passions and attain vigour and strength. I therefore particularly recommend to every young man and young woman who reads these lines to give the spinning wheel a trial. They will find that shortly after they sit down to spin, their passions begin to subside. I do not mean to say that they would remain calm for all the rest of the day even after the spinning is discontinued; for human passions are fleetier even than the wind and to subdue them completely requires no end of patience. All that I claim is that in the spinning wheel they will find a powerful means of cultivating steadiness. But then, some one will ask, why do not I recommend the far more poeti-

cal rosary, if that is the purpose which it is intended to subserve. My reply to this is that the spinning wheel possesses some virtues in addition to those it has in common with the rosary. I have not prescribed it for a recluse living in a state of nature in a cave of the Himalayas and subsisting on the herbs and roots of the forest. I have placed it only before such countless persons like myself, who, while living in the work-a-day world, are anxious to serve the country and to practise *Brahmacharya* simultaneously.

And as for ridiculing my suggestion to ply the spinning wheel for securing the release of the Bengal prisoners, it only comes to this that we are not prepared to stir ourselves a single inch to secure their release. For the spinning wheel here means the boycott of all foreign cloth. And what a compelling force that has and how we are at present unable to develop any other kind of force, we shall presently see as we proceed with our examination of the other points that follow. My presenting the spinning wheel even to veteran soldiers fit to wield the lance and the sword, therefore is not a sign of madness but a hall-mark of knowledge,—a knowledge not derived merely from book-learning but from the plenitude of experience.

#### WHY IT IS THE ONLY POLITICAL PROGRAMME

(4) The question as to what loss would the British suffer if India stopped purchasing her sixty crores rupees worth of cloth from them is quite out of place. Our duty is simply to see whether and if so how far it would profit us. The stopping of the purchase of sixty crores worth of foreign cloth would, in the first place, mean the saving of so much money to the crores of Indian homes. In other words it would mean so much addition to their income. Then, it would spell the creation of so much fresh industry, the organisation of crores into a joint co-operative effort, the conservation and utilisation of the energy of the millions and the dedication of crores of lives to the service of the motherland. The carrying out of such a gigantic task would, further, give us a realisation of our own

strength. It would mean our acquiring a through mastery of the detail and innumerable knotty problems which it presents, *e. g.* learning to keep account of every pie, learning to live in the villages in sanitary and healthy conditions, removing the difficulties that block the way and so on. For, unless we learn all this, we would not be able to accomplish this task. The spinning wheel, then, provides us with a means for generating this capacity in us. So long, therefore, as one has not grasped the inner meaning of the wheel, one may ridicule it, but when once the grand meaning is understood it would become simply impossible to tear oneself away from it.

Again, the British are an intelligent people. The officials are a wise and shrewd lot. I know this. That is why I present the spinning wheel to my people. We cannot overreach the British by the glibness of our tongue or by the power of our pen. Our threats they have grown quite accustomed to, while as for our physical prowess it can avail us but little against their bombs rained down from the aeroplanes. But these people understand and respect patience, perseverance, determination and capacity for organisation. Cloth represents the biggest item of their trade. The accomplishment of its boycott by us would awaken them to a sense of our strength. They are not holding India merely to feed their pride; nor is it by mere force of arms, but it is by tact and cunning that their rule over us is maintained. When their trade is made to rest on our untrammelled, free will, their rule also will undergo a similar transformation. Today both are being imposed on us against our will. If we succeed in shaping one of them according to our will, the other will automatically follow suit. But it is easy enough to understand that while their trade relations with us remain unchanged, no change in the political relationship is possible.

I may repeat that I would today discard the spinning wheel if some one shows a better and more universal political programme than hand-spinning. But upto this time I have found none, I have been shown none. I am anxious to know if there is any.

## HOW IT SOLVES THE BREAD PROBLEM

(5) That the spinning wheel can solve our bread-problem hardly needs to be proved to a reader of the *Navajivan*. The figures published about various Khadi organisations would show that thousands of poor women are today eking out their living by spinning. Nobody has yet denied that the spinning wheel can bring the spinner at least an anna a day. And there are crores of people in India who hardly earn even a pice a day. So long as things stand thus, it is hardly necessary to point out the close relation that exists between the spinning wheel and the bread-problem.

As for the charge that the spinning wheel has done harm to the country it is up to those who level it to prove it. This activity is by its very nature such that there can be no waste of effort in it. Nothing can interrupt its continuity and even a little exercise of it saves one from mighty evils. What does it matter if some Khadi shops came to an end? That phenomenon is common to every trade. The money invested in them has at least remained in the country, while the experience gained through it has enabled us to make further progress. Besides, if some of the shops had to close down, instances can be cited of many more, better organised shops, that have grown up in their place.

## SUPPLEMENTS DOES NOT REPLACE

(6) I have not contemplated, much less advised, the abandonment of a single healthy, life-giving industrial activity for the sake of hand spinning. The entire foundation of the spinning wheel rests on the fact that there are crores of semi-unemployed people in India. And I should admit that if there were none such there would be no room for the spinning wheel. But as a matter of fact everybody who has been to our villages knows that they have months of idleness which may prove their ruin. Even my appeal to the middle class people to spin for sacrifice is with reference to their spare hours. The spinning wheel

movement is destructive of no enterprise whatever. It is a life-giving activity. And that is why I have called it *Annapurna or the butter for bread* or the replenisher.

(Translated from *Navajivan* by P.)

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27th May, 1936

### SPINNING AN ART?

A Madras Inspectress of Education has pronounced sentence against the spinning wheel for Brahmin girls. This judgment of hers has given rise to criticism against the lady. If the Charkha is good enough for non-Brahmin girls why not, it is argued, for Brahmin girls? The question is apposite when caste arrogance is being levelled to the ground. Moreover the Inspectress evidently does not know that the finest yarn is spun by Brahmin girls and that in many Brahmin families the tradition of spinning for the sacred thread is still kept up.

But a side question has arisen out of the criticism of the Inspectress. Is spinning an art? Is it not a humdrum monotonous process likely to weary the children? Well all the evidence hitherto collected goes to show that spinning is an elegant art and the process itself is extremely pleasant. No mechanical pull is enough to draw the various counts. And those who do spinning as an art know the pleasure they derive when the fingers and the eyes infallibly guide the required count. Art to be art must soothe. I reproduced over a year ago the testimony of Sir Prabhashanker Pattani to show how after the day's trying work he went to the Charkha for soothing his nerves and giving him undisturbed sleep. I extract the following passage from the letter of a friend who found solace for her shattered nerves in spinning:

"When . . . I hastened to my room and then in the dark struggled with an anguish which rent me from top to toe, I prayed and strove for some time and then turned to

the spinning wheel and found in it a magical comfort. The quiet regular motion of its rhythm immediately steadied me and the thought of its service brought me nearer to God."

This is not the solitary experience of one or two but many spinners. It is however no use saying that spinning will be pleasurable to all because it has been the joy of many. Painting is acknowledged to be an exquisite art. But it is not everybody who takes to it.

M. K. G.

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*3rd June, 1926*

## NATIONAL EDUCATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

A Gujarati correspondent has raised certain questions about national education. Some of them are summarised below.

"Since some of the staunchest supporters of non-co-operation have lost faith in it and since the numbers attending national institutions are dwindling, what is the use of holding on these tottering schools and colleges and wasting good money after bad institutions?"

My believing eye detects a flaw in this argument. My faith in non-co-operation remains as staunch as ever. I can find it possible to reconcile myself to the existing national institutions even though the attendance may be reduced to half a dozen. For the half a dozen will be the makers of Swaraj whenever it comes. When virgins are required to perform certain sacred ceremonies, others are not accepted as substitute if no virgin is found. And even one virgin if found is enough to save the situation. So will it be with the planting of the Swaraj flag-post. The flags will be unfurled with the unsullied hands of those, be they ever so few, who have remained true to their original creed.

I do not therefore regard it as waste of money to continue the national institutions. They are so many oases in the desert. They give the water of life to the souls thirsting for freedom. In writing this I cast no reflection upon those who attend or otherwise support Government schools. They are entitled to hold the view if they choose that theirs is the only way or also a way to freedom. National institutions are meant for those whose thirst for freedom is not satisfied by the ones managed or patronised by the Government. Few as they are, insignificant though they may appear, they supply a felt want and contain in them the seeds, as it appears to non-co-operators, of true and lasting freedom.

The final success of these institutions depends upon the worth of the teachers. 'But they are deserting the national schools and colleges,' says the critic. So some of them are. It tries the faith of the survivors. Have they the courage to stand alone? Are there enough monied men to support the surviving national institutions? On the correct answer to these questions depends the future of the national institutions and with them the freedom of the country, and so far as I can judge, there are teachers enough to stand the severest test and there are monied men enough to support them. I know no organisation that has died for want of funds. Organisations die always far want of men i. e. honesty, efficiency and self-sacrifice. And it is my certain knowledge that where there are teachers, pupils are not wanting.

But the pupils have perhaps the largest share of responsibility on their shoulders. The future depends upon their ability, integrity, application, and patriotism. The teachers cannot give what the pupils have not. The teachers can help to 'draw out' in the pupils what they have. If it were otherwise, if the teachers were capable of putting something into their pupils, all the latter receiving instruction under them will be alike, whereas we know as a matter of fact that no two pupils have been known to be alike. The pupils must therefore have initiative. They must cease to be mere imitators. They must

learn to think and act for themselves and yet be thoroughly obedient and disciplined. The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied, unbridled license is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to self and one's neighbours.

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3rd June, 1926

### RESOURCEFULNESS

The manager of the Satyagraha Ashram tells me that he has more orders than he can cope with for *taklis*. It is a healthy sign that so many people want *taklis*. But if spinning is, and it is, an art, it must evoke one's resourcefulness. It is not possible to supply millions of *taklis* in one centre. The virtue of spinning lies in its capacity to be independent of central help. The aim of the All India Spinners' Association is to decentralise every thing at the earliest possible moment. *Taklis* are being manufactured at the Ashram for those who need inducement to make the effort. But it is an instrument that can be and should be made by every one for himself. A simple piece of dried bamboo, a piece of broken slate, a knife, a little hammer, a small file, and if possible a compass, is all that is necessary to make first class *taklis* at one pice each. A bamboo *takli* can be made inside of half an hour and gives just as good work as the steel instrument. Those who will master the art must be resourceful. Let us remember that spinning is the poor man's art. It is his solace. The tools also of that art must be within easy reach of the poorest. Let each boy and girl be therefore taught to make the *takli* himself or herself. They will take pleasure in making their own *taklis* and greater pleasure than hitherto in spinning with *taklis* made by themselves.

M. K. G.

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*3rd June, 1923*

## 'A CLEVER COTTON SPINNER'

A very beautiful story is told in the Anguttara Nikaya, which is recorded by Dr. Grimm on P. 409 of his scholarly work, published this year, called 'The Doctrine of the Buddha ; the Religion of Reason.'

In the story, the wife, who has faith in the Buddha and his doctrine, says to her husband, who is seriously ill and near to death :

"Do not die with sorrowful thoughts ; such a death, the Exalted One does not praise.

"Are you afraid that, after your death, I may not be able to support our children ? But I am a clever cotton-spinner, and I shall have no difficulty in keeping up our household. Or do you think, that after your death I shall leave off longing for a sight of the Buddha and his monks ? Do you think that peace shall be wanting to my soul ? Do you doubt whether I shall stand firm without wavering, in knowing the Doctrine of the Master and in trusting it ? But if ever any uncertainty should come upon me, why, then, He is staying near us, the Exalted One, the Holy Buddha, and I can go to him and put my question to him." (Anguttara Nikaya, III. Pali Text Society, P. 295)

"But I am a clever cotton-spinner, and I shall have no difficulty in keeping up our household." The faithful wife was able in this way to relieve her husband's mind of that thirst and longing at the moment of death which would have distracted his mind. If, however, she had not been a 'clever cotton-spinner', how could she possibly have relieved her husband's mind ? The whole of the wife's speech is so beautiful and the value of being a 'clever cotton-spinner' is so clear, that I wished to share it with the readers of *Young India*.

C. F. A.

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*10th June, 1926*

## CO-OPERATION IN SPINNING

BY M. K. GANDHI

A dear friend asks me to answer the question that has occurred to him and his other friends. 'Is there co-operation in spinning? Does it not rather make people purely individualistic, self-centred and keep them separate from one another even as so many pebbles?'

The briefest and the most decisive answer I can give is, 'Go, watch any well-organised spinning centre and test the thing for yourself. You will then discover that spinning cannot succeed without co-operation.'

But brief though this answer is, it is, I know, useless for those (and they are the majority) who cannot or will not make the time for paying such a visit. I must therefore try to convince by describing such a centre in the best way I can.

In speaking to a co-operative society in Madras last year, I said that through handspinning I was trying to found the largest co-operative society known to the world. This is not an untrue claim. It may be ambitious. It is not untrue because handspinning cannot serve the purpose for which it is intended unless millions actually co-operate in it.

The purpose is to drive away enforced idleness and pauperism which is the result mainly of that idleness in India. This purpose it will be admitted is grand enough. The effort must be correspondingly great.

There must be co-operation from the very commencement. If spinning makes one self-reliant it also enables one to understand the necessity of interdependence almost at every step. An ordinary spinner must find a ready market for her surplus yarn. She cannot weave it. There can be no market for her yarn without the co-operation, of the large number of people. Just as our agriculture is possible only because there is co-operation, be it ever so little, of millions in regard to the culti-

vation and disposal of the produce, so will spinning be successful only if there is co-operation on an equally large scale.

Take the working of any typical centre. At the central office is collected seed cotton for spinners. The cotton is ginned by ginners perhaps at the centre. It is distributed then among carders who re-deliver it in the shape of slivers. These are now ready to be distributed among the spinners who bring their yarn from week to week and take away fresh slivers and their wages in return. The yarn thus received is given to weavers to weave and received back for sale in the shape of Khaddar. This latter must now be sold to the wearers—the general public. Thus the centre office has to be in constant living human touch with a very large number of people irrespective of caste, colour or creed. For the centre has no dividends to make, has no exclusive care but the care of the most needy. The centre to be useful must keep itself clean in every sense of the term. The bond between it and the component parts of the vast organisation is purely spiritual or moral. A spinning centre therefore is a co-operative society whose members are ginners, carders, spinners, weavers and buyers—all tied together by a common bond, mutual good-will and service. In this society the course of every piece can be traced almost with certainty as it floats to and fro. And as these centres grow and draw the youth of the country who have the fire of patriotism burning brightly in their hearts and whose purity will stand the strain of all temptation, they will, they must, become centres for radiating elementary knowledge in hygiene, sanitation, domestic treatment of simple diseases among the villagers and education among their children suited to their needs. That time is not yet. The beginning indeed has been made. But the movement can grow only slowly. It is not possible to show substantial results till Khadi has become a saleable article in the bazaar like *ghee* or, better still, a postage stamp. For the present a vast amount of energy has to be spent in educating the people to buy Khadi in the place of any other cloth even as a child would eat and

bless the rice cooked by its mother without stopping to think of the quality or the price of the rice so cooked. If it did, it would find that the rice cooked by the mother was far too dear for the labour and the love spent upon the working. And so will it be with Khadi one day, when the children of mother Hind wake from their deep sleep and realise that yarn spun and worked by the hands of her daughters and sons can never be too dear for her crores of children. When this simple truth dawns upon us, spinning centres will multiply a hundred fold, a ray of hope will penetrate the dark Indian cottages and that hope will be the surest foundation for the freedom we want but do not know how to achieve.

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*17th June, 1926*

### SOME KNOTTY POINTS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A medical friend from far-off Burma writes :

“ Why do you emphasise Khaddar and not Swadeshi ?  
Is not Swadeshi the principle and Khaddar a mere detail ? ”

I do not regard Khaddar to be a detail. Swadeshi is a theoretical term. Khaddar is the concrete and central fact of Swadeshi. Swadeshi without Khaddar is like the body without life, fit only to receive a decent burial or cremation. The only Swadeshi cloth is Khaddar. If one is to interpret Swadeshi in the language of and in terms of the millions of this country, Khaddar is a substantial thing in Swadeshi like the air we breathe. The test of Swadeshi is not the universality of the use of an article which goes under the name of Swadeshi, but the universality of participation in the production or manufacture of such article. Thus considered mill-made cloth is Swadeshi only in a restricted sense. For, in its manufacture only an infinitesimal number of India's millions can take part. But in the manufacture of Khaddar millions can take part. The more the merrier. With Khaddar, in my opinion, is bound

up the welfare of millions of human beings. Khaddar is therefore the largest part of Swadeshi and it is the only true demonstration of it. All else follows from it. India can live, even if we do not use brass buttons or tooth-picks made in India. But India cannot live if we refuse to manufacture and wear Khaddar. Khaddar will cease to have this paramount importance when a more profitable employment is discovered for the idle hours of India's millions.

But says the Doctor, 'Good Khaddar is costly and the ordinary variety is ugly.'

I deny that any Khaddar is ugly. Want of the dead-sameness of a machine-made article is not a sign of ugliness, but, it is a sign of life, even as absence of sameness in the millions of leaves of a tree is no sign of its ugliness. As a matter of fact, it is the variety about the leaves which gives a tree its life-like beauty. I can picture a machine-made tree whose every leaf would be absolutely the same size. It would look a ghastly thing, because we have not yet ceased to love the living tree. And, why should the cost of Khaddar, good or bad, worry us if every penny we pay for it goes directly into the pockets of the starving millions? My experience is that in the majority of cases where people have taken to Khaddar they have revised their tastes about dress. Though Khaddar may be dearer yard per yard than the same quality of Manchester calico, the rejection of superfluous clothing more than balances the extra cost. Those who wish to wear fine Khaddar can now obtain at all the principal Khadi centres.

The medical friend next questions the desirability of spinning and gravely suggests that if everybody would spin, the poor people who depend upon spinning for their livelihood would be losers. He forgets that those who are called upon to spin by way of sacrifice promote the Khaddar atmosphere and make it possible to render spinning easier and by small inventions and discoveries make it more profitable. The wages of professional spinners cannot suffer in any way whatsoever by sacrificial spinning.

The friend then asks: "Should doctors cease to prescribe foreign drugs and instead learn the use of Ayurvedic and Unani drugs?"

I have never considered the exclusion of everything foreign under every conceivable circumstance as part of Swadeshi. The broad definition of Swadeshi is the use of all home-made things to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for the protection of home-industry more especially those industries without which India will become pauperised. In my opinion, therefore, Swadeshi which excludes the use of everything foreign, because it is foreign, no matter how beneficial it may be, and irrespective of the fact that it impoverishes nobody, is a narrow interpretation of Swadeshi. Foreign drugs therefore where they are highly efficacious and not otherwise objectionable, I should use without the slightest hesitation: that is, if I did not object to drugs altogether. But there is no doubt that there is among many medical men with Western diploma a fashion, altogether harmful, of decrying Ayurvedic and Unani drugs, some of which are indeed of great potency and cheap withal. Any movement therefore on the part of those who have received a training in Western medicine to explore the possibilities of Ayurvedic and Unani systems would be most welcome and desirable.

The last question that this friend asks has been repeatedly answered in these pages: "Are you against all machinery?" My answer is emphatically, 'No.' But, I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottagers I should welcome.

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8th July, 1926

### FROM THE FRYING PAN

The draft rules published by the Madras Government about spinning in primary schools show what can happen even under 'responsible' Government when the government may afford to ignore public opinion. What response can a Government that is, say, dependent upon the votes of zamindars make to their voteless ryots? When, therefore, there is only a caricature of responsible government, things can be much worse than under a frankly and purely autocratic government. The latter not depending upon the votes of any class can afford to be impartial to all. The former dare not.

The draft rules are naturally from the Education Minister who is considered to be responsible to the people *i. e.* the select electorate. But having no knowledge evidently of rural conditions he thinks that instruction in handspinning in primary schools is unnecessary. Instead, therefore, of frankly putting a ban upon it, he seeks to circumvent it by ruling that 'practical instruction should not be introduced in standards below the fourth without the previous approval of the Director of Public Instruction,' that it should 'ordinarily have reference to the chief occupations or industries of the locality or the class of pupils,' and that 'spinning by itself without provision for weaving should not form a subject for such institution.' The last condition is enough to keep out spinning from the average primary school, if only because hardly a primary school can afford the expense of a weaving instructor and the floor space required for setting up a loom. Indeed even the spinning wheel has by experience been found to be too expensive and too large for the average school. The All India Spinners' Association is therefore advising all schoolmasters and Municipal Councils to introduce the *takli* which is inexpensive, handy, requires no floor space to keep and does not easily go out of order. It is surprising too that neither the Minister nor his

advisers seem to realise that handspinning cannot be and must not be put on a level with the other occupations. As Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari points out in his appeal to local bodies in the Madras Presidency, it is pre-eminently a universal national occupation which having all but died needs to be revived and popularised. It would be a useless waste of time and money to teach in primary schools living occupations which children can learn much better and much more quickly from their parents than from theoretical and indifferent teachers. I am glad therefore that the Chittor District Education Council has voted against the draft rules and hope that the other bodies will follow suit.

M. K. G.

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29th July, 1925

## THE HYDRA-HEADED MONSTER

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend has sent me a gist of what appears in the Southern vernacular press from the pen of a learned Pundit. He summarises the Pundit's plea for untouchability in this fashion :

(1) " The fact that once Adi-Shankara asked a *Chandala* to be aloof from him, and the fact that Trishanku when he was condemned to be a *Chandula* was shunned by all people, prove that untouchability is not of recent growth.

(2) " The *Chandalas* are the outcastes of the Aryan society.

(3) " The untouchables themselves are not free from the sin of untouchability.

(4) " The untouchables are so because they kill animals and because they have constantly to do with flesh, blood, bones and night-soil.

(5) " The untouchables must be isolated even as slaughter-houses, toddy-shops and houses of ill-fame are or should be.

(6) " It should be enough that untouchables are not denied the privileges of the other world.



(7) "A Gandhi may touch these people, but so can he fast. We may neither fast nor touch the untouchables.

(8) "Untouchability is a necessity for man's growth.

(9) "Man has magnetic powers about him. This *shakti* is like milk. It will be damaged by improper contacts. If one can keep musk and onion together one may mix Brahmans and untouchables."

These are the chief points summarised by the correspondent. Untouchability is a hydra-headed monster. It is therefore necessary, each time the monster lifts its head, to deal with it. The stories told in the Puranas are some of the most dangerous, if we do not know their bearing on the present conditions. The Shastras would be death-traps if we were to regulate our conduct according to every detail given in them or according to that of the characters therein described. They help us only to define and argue out fundamental principles. If some well-known character in religious books sinned against God or man, is that a warrant for our repeating the sin? It is enough for us to be told, once for all. *Truth* is the only thing that matters in the world, that *Truth* is God. It is irrelevant to be told that even Yudhishtira was betrayed into an untruth. It is more relevant for us to know that when he spoke an untruth, he had to suffer for it that very moment and that his great name in no way protected him from punishment. Similarly, it is irrelevant for us to be told that Adi Shankara avoided a *Chandala*. It is enough for us to know that a religion that teaches us to treat all that lives as we treat ourselves, cannot possibly countenance the inhuman treatment of a single creature, let alone a whole class of perfectly innocent human beings. Moreover we have not even all the facts before us to judge what Adi-Shankara did or did not do. Still less, do we know the meaning of the word '*Chandala*' where it occurs. It has admittedly many meanings one of which is a sinner. But, if all sinners are to be regarded as untouchables, it is very much to be feared that we should all, not excluding the Pundit himself, be under the ban of untouchability. That untouchability is an old institution, nobody has

ever denied. But, if it is an evil, it cannot be defended on the ground of its antiquity.

If the untouchables are the outcastes of the Aryan society, so much the worse for that society. And if the Aryans at some stage in their progress regarded a certain class of people as outcastes by way of punishment, there is no reason why that punishment should descend upon their progeny irrespective of the causes for which their ancestors were punished.

That there is untouchability even amongst untouchables merely demonstrates that evil cannot be confined and that its deadening effect is all-pervading. The existence of untouchability amongst untouchables is an additional reason for cultured Hindu society to rid itself of the curse with the quickest despatch.

If the untouchables are so because they kill animals and because they have to do with flesh, blood, bones and night-soil, every nurse and every doctor should become an untouchable and so should Christians, Mussalmans and all so-called high-class Hindus who kill animals for food or sacrifice.

The argument that because slaughter-houses, toddy-shops, and houses of ill-fame are or should be isolated, untouchables should likewise be isolated betrays gross prejudice. Slaughter-houses and toddy-shops are and should be isolated. But neither butchers nor publicans are isolated. Prostitutes should be isolated because their occupation is revolting and detrimental to the well-being of society. Whereas the occupation of 'untouchables' is not only desirable but a necessity for the well-being of the society.

To say that 'untouchables' are not denied privileges of the other world is the acme of insolence. If it was possible to deny them the privileges of the other world, it is highly likely that the defenders of the monster would isolate them even in the other world.

It is throwing dust in the eyes of the people to say that 'a Gandhi may touch the 'untouchables,' not so other people,' as if the touching and service of 'untouchables' was so injurious

as to require for it men specially proof against untouchable germs. Heaven only knows what punishment is in store for Mussalmans, Christians and others who do not believe in untouchability.

The plea of animal magnetism is altogether overdone. The high-class men are not all sweet-smelling like musk, nor are untouchables foul-smelling like onion. There are thousands of untouchables who are any day infinitely superior to the so-called high class people.

It is painful to discover that even after five years of continuous propaganda against untouchability, there are learned people enough found to support such an immoral and evil custom. That belief in untouchability can co-exist with learning in the same person, adds no status to untouchability but makes one despair of mere learning being an aid to character or sanity.

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*2nd December, 1926*

### THE WHEEL OF LIFE

[The headline is of my making but what follows is an abstract of C. Rajagopalachar's notes submitted to the Royal Agricultural Commission. The value of the notes lies in its being an accurate record of his experience. After a careful perusal of the note, the reader will answer for himself whether the spinning wheel is or is not truly the Wheel of Life for India's millions. C. Rajagopalachar's second suggestion that the temptation of drink must be removed from the poor people is worthy of serious consideration by those who will solve the problem of economic distress. If the men will use up in drink the hard earned coppers of their women spinners even the spinning wheel will be but a frail support. [M. K. G.]

The conclusion that hand-spinning is the most suitable supplementary industry is confirmed by actual experience in the Khaddar revival work undertaken in this province by the

organisations of the Indian National Congress. There are handspinning centres working in Salem and Coimbatore as well as in South Arcot, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Mudura, Ramnad, Tinnevely and Malabar, not to refer to the Telugu districts. The centres opened do not exhaust by any means the possibilities of Khaddar work. The extent of the work has been limited by the funds and number of organisers and workers available at present. It has also been necessarily limited by the pace at which the demand for handspun cloth has progressed as a result of propaganda. There is, in potentiality, a market for Khaddar as wide as if not the entire population, at least the middle and upper classes.

That hand-spinning with its poor return has appealed to the economic sense of the rural labourer is evident from the rapid and spontaneous development in every dry rural area where a good centre has been started with efficient management. In the Tamil districts there are now altogether over 30,000 wheels, all worked in the peasants' own cottages, which they will not stop unless compelled to do so by our failing to supply cotton or buy the product. If there is any doubt felt on this point, one has only to go and ask any of these 30,000 and odd women who are now spinning what she thinks of it after her four years' experience. How far it has become a necessary part of her domestic economy is known only to those organisers of the Khadi centres who occasionally for want of capital or other reason fail to have cotton for distribution among the spinners.

The 30,000 wheels have come into existence in a comparatively short period of time. In less than ten months in the centre in my charge, where there was not one wheel working at commencement, 2,000 came into existence. The women who have taken to handspinning in this province have done so simply and purely to supplement the family earnings and not out of any political motive or as a result of any political propaganda. The unbalanced domestic budget was the sole creative force. The progress of handspinning in our districts

may therefore be taken as an accurately conducted economic experiment unaffected by any political forces.

The actual experience of Khaddar work during these four years in the Tamil districts has shown, (1) that the wages earned by handspinning, though very small, are enough automatically to attract the agricultural population, (2) that the occupation is eminently suited to the conditions of life of that population, and (3) that there is no other remunerative and suitable employment available to large classes of people.

It must be stated here that as yet in our province only women have taken to the industry. It will be some time before the men can be induced to take to it on a large scale. But an industry that gives occupation to the women and girls, including the old and feeble, is sufficiently important quantitatively to a population whose female element is ready and willing to do manual work. Men assist in some of the processes involved even now, such as sometimes, ginning, carding, walking to and from the issue depot, etc. It is expected that the pressure of economic distress and a large demand for Khaddar and the example of voluntary spinners will break down the objection of the male agricultural population to sitting at the wheel in course of time.

Our experience has shown that the spinning wheel has not only operated as relief for chronic idleness of the able-bodied, but also as an effective old-age insurance, for the protection of the old and feeble, who would otherwise be desititute and uncared for in a poor population dependent on daily labour for their subsistence. Our experience has also shown that no special training is necessary to spread the industry. Daughter learns from mother and neighbour from neighbour and the thing spreads easily from one village to another.

The vast majority of our spinners in the Tamil district spin about 10 to 12 counts of yarn, about 400 yards per hour. The spinner is able to ply the wheel at any time of the day or night whenever she feels leisure and inclination. She does not feel any physical strain, even though she sits at the wheel

continuously for hours. The peasant women in the area in my charge have been found to earn (taking 15 cases picked at random) on the average Rs. 14-9-8 during the twelve months between 1st November 1925 and 1st October 1926. Their work on the fields and at home left them leisure for an average output of fifty pounds in the year. Some women earned as much as Rs. 23-9-0 in the year. Few earned less than Rs. 15 per year.

This may appear very small to those who are unacquainted with the condition of our agricultural population. The income of the same families from their lands is not in most cases above Rs. 50 per family per year including even the fodder obtained for maintaining live-stock. This will show the substantial value, to these families, of spinning as a supplementary industry. A family may often run two or more wheels in which case the income is greatly increased.

The chief difficulties in extending the market for Khaddar are, (1) the fashion that has been created for fine fabrics, (2) the greater cost of handspun cloth as compared with that of mill products, especially cloth imported from abroad. If the second difficulty is overcome, the poor classes would at once support the product of their own cottage industry and there would be an unlimited market. The industry needs therefore protection against mill yarn and mill cloth. This protection is at present obtained by appealing to the philanthropy of the upper classes. It can also be done by a scheme of State bounty devised for the purpose so as to help production and reduce prices. If for instance the present production of 8 lakhs in the Tamil districts is to be increased tenfold (which it is quite possible to achieve), the bounty needed would only be about Rs. 20 lakhs a year. This protection, if continued for some years, would so increase the general prosperity and purchasing power of the poorest classes, by reasons of the national recurring annual saving through the revived industry supplanting the purchase of the foreign product, that the bounty may then become unnecessary.

It is not, however, expected that the Government, as at

present constituted, would come forward with this assistance. It is therefore necessary for us to depend upon the philanthropic protection of the upper classes in order that the poor may be saved the effects of unemployment. No economic theories can be an answer to the problem of unemployment which demands solution at any cost. If the Government is not prepared to pay the cost of this solution it is the duty of any community which wants to stand on stable foundations to bear the cost voluntarily.

State assistance, by way of lending capital and facilities for production and distribution, reduced freights, preferential treatment in octroi and other such taxation can and should be given at once in any case.

The State too can help by making its departments purchase handspun for all cloth needed for uniforms, hospitals and the like, and by encouraging its officers to set the example by using the products of the supplementary home industry of our agricultural population in preference to finer fabrics.

There is one other thing which can be done besides furnishing a supplementary occupation which will automatically conserve and improve the resources of the agriculturist population. If the temptations and opportunities for spending his earnings on liquor be removed, the agriculturist would be less poor than he is. If nothing else can be done, this at least can be, which again is an appeal to the upper and middle classes who have made the national budget depend on the poor man's drink-waste. I am not urging prohibition here, in the usual way. Total prohibition may be delayed or opposed in other countries for various reasons ; but where the vast majority of the population is poor and where there is such terrible enforced idleness, drink is a danger and a poison which the State is, in duty, bound to save the people from.

I deprecate attempts at giving facilities for factory employment to our female agricultural population. We can and should find such occupations for them as will not involve separation from the family for continued durations. Our experience of the

effects of ginning and other factories near rural areas on the life and character of the female rural population warns us against any extension in that direction in order to solve the problem of rural unemployment. C. R.

### ARTIFICIAL SILK

The classes that before indulged in silk *sarees* have found that they cannot afford that costly luxury. But they will not honestly confess their poverty and therefore still indulge in worthless imitations of silk. What is called 'artificial' silk is a flimsy worthless article which has none of the good qualities of genuine silk except the temporary glossy appearance of silk. Those who were once invariably wearing silk dresses may pass the cheap new stuff off as silk. But like all imitations it is really costly, for it is not worth the money paid for it. It costs much more than good Khadi, and does not last half the time. It is a foreign article and all the money paid for it goes out of the country. In the twelve months of 1925-26, nearly a crore of rupees worth of this article has been imported into India. Think of the terrible waste that this means. And it is four times the Khadi produced and sold by us with all our effort during that period.

### STUDENTS' KHADI UNIONS

The draft scheme for a Students' Khadi Union which is now under serious consideration by the students of the Morris College at Nagpur is one which is worthy of general adoption. It is a very simple plan for poor people to find cash without interest.

A group of 50 college students can form a Union with a monthly contribution of Rs. 2 each payable on the same day as their college fees. The Union will have a Committee of management consisting of the Principal, a Secretary, and Treasurer and two other members. The collections amounting to Rs. 100 every month will be utilised to buy Khadi from an All-India Spinners' Association depot or other certified Khadi depot.



Lots will be drawn each month and four members whose names are drawn will have the right to deuide the Khadi. They will have thus each Rs. 25 worth of Khadi, enough to make a year's complete outfit in *dhoties*, shirts, coats, caps, towels and bedsheets. The successful members may if they like, transfer their rights to any other of their own choice. Every month, thus, four names will be eliminated, and lots drawn from the rest in succeeding months. At the end of the year all the members will have had Khadi for the full amount of the contributions paid by them, and sufficient clothing without having to pay for it all at one time. All that a student wants for a year for coating, shirting, *dhoties* towels, and bedsheets can be met from 35 yards of good durable Khadi which can be covered by Rs. 24 made up of the monthly contributions of two rupees.

The monthly contribution cannot be too heavy a charge on the students' resources, considering how much they spend for their meals and tiffin, their college fees, and their games and amusements. I know that if students who indulge in cigarettes give up the pernicious and wasteful habit, they could without further expense pay up the Khadi subscription and have enough clothing for the whole year. The members of such a Union will soon become effective centres of propaganda for the spread of Khadi among young men.

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*23rd December, 1926*

### KHADI SERVICE

BY M. K. GÁNDHI

The Council of the All-India Spinners' Association, after most careful and exhaustive discussion and after considering all the opinions that had been received upon the draft published some time ago in these pages, has recast the rules which the reader will find published elsewhere. Forms of application and contract of service are also published. This service provides those who want to serve the cause of Khadi an

opportunity of so doing and at the same time a modest remuneration for themselves.

The Board of Studies will also be the Examination Board. It does not mean necessarily that all the Examiners will examine all the candidates. But the various examinations required under the rules will be conducted by one or more of the examiners, selected by the Chairman of the Board.

Suggestions were received that the course which extends to 3 years is altogether too long for the remuneration promised. But all the members came to the conclusion that 3 years were none too long for the subjects to be studied and the practical work to be done. Experience gained during the last five years has shown that continued practice is necessary to learn the various arts that are included in the course. Those who have gone out to organise Khadi work in the different villages with less experience and knowledge have found themselves handicapped. The science of handspinning is capable of progressive improvement. Researches that are being made from time to time show that there is room for the best among us to apply themselves to the development of the art so that without extra effort or time the income of the millions, for whom handspinning is designed, may be almost doubled.

It is an unfortunate fact that in our schools and colleges handicrafts find no place. All the knowledge, therefore gained in the schools and colleges is of little use for the training required for Khadi service. Therefore a graduate has to start almost on equal terms with a raw youth. Indeed it is possible for the former even to labour under a handicap, if he has developed, as many do develop, a repugnance towards physical exertion.

The second question that came up for anxious consideration was that of remuneration. The Khadi Service is designed for meeting the need of paupers. It is impossible to hold out bright pecuniary prospects in such a service. I have no doubt whatsoever that the scale of salaries devised by the Government is out of all proportion to the condition of India's masses. It has relation to the requirements of the inhabitants of a rich island

and therefore means an almost unbearable burden upon the poor millions. Let no one, therefore, compare the remuneration offered under the Khadi Service with that obtainable under the Government service. At the same time I make bold to say that the start offered is as good as that offered by the Government. Where the Khadi Service fails in comparison is in the ultimate prospect. The maximum attainable under the Government may reach four figures whereas Khadi Service offers an increase amounting to Rs. 20 at the most. For those therefore who have received an English education to enter this service is undoubtedly a sacrifice. But is it too much to ask the English-educated youths of the country to make what after all is a very small sacrifice? I consider it to be very small, for it should be remembered that they have received their English education at the expense of the masses. It is an exclusive education which the masses can never get. And it is an education which, if it has given us a few self-sacrificing patriots, has also produced many more men who have been willing accomplices with the Government in holding India in bondage.

It will also be noted that to the poor and deserving, the service offers a suitable scholarship and at the end of the training, while the rules bind the Association to keep those who may be found properly qualified employed for 10 years, they leave it open for them to serve the Association or to seek prospects elsewhere. This relaxation has been purposely made in order to induce young men to come and learn the art of spinning and all it means even though they may not join the service.

#### HAND WEAVING AMONG PARSIS

A correspondent extracts for me the following passage from the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Volume VII, Page 155, edition 1883:

"The Parsi weavers of Gandevi were of special note, and in 1787-88 Dr. Hove, a European traveller, visited that town for the express purpose of learning from the Parsis some knowledge of their art. The industry has died out for above fifty years.

The Parsi women of the priestly class still, however, make a large number of sacred threads *Kusti* or *Kasti*, worn by Parsi men and women. These find a large sale in Bombay and cost Rs. 3 or more according to the labour displayed. Some of the Parsi women also make tape for cots and rough *doti* and Khadi to order for local traders, but the Parsis as a rule have quite abandoned the weaving in which they excelled."

What a great boon to India and to themselves it would be if the Parsis who are conducting liquor-shops were to exchange the immoral liquor traffic for the uplifting and productive occupation of weaving in which they excelled only 50 years ago! The reference to the handspun *Kasti* reminds me of the stalwart Parsi sister whom I met in Navasari and who told me that the Parsi ladies of Navasari who made their livelihood out of *Kasti*-spinning and whose sacred fingers gave the religious touch to the *Kasti*, were hounded out by those who had gone there under the guise of reformers to substitute the handspun thread with the machine-spun.

M. K. G.

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23rd December, 1926

### KHADI SERVICE RULES

There shall be under the All-India Spinners' Association a service called the 'Khadi Service'.

No one shall in future be accepted as a member of that service who does not hold a certificate from the Board of Studies hereinafter referred to and appointed by the Council of the All-India Spinners' Association, provided that this rule shall not apply to those who are at present in the employ of the Association or its agencies and provided further that the rule shall not apply to uncertified persons whom the Association or its agencies may deem it necessary to employ for their activities.

The Board of Studies shall consist of:

Sjt. Satis Chandra Das Gupta

Sjt. Vinoba Bhawe

„ C. Rajagopalachariar

„ K. Santanam

„ Lakshmidas Purushottam

Babu Rajendra Prasad

Sjt. S. G. Pujari

„ Shankarlal Banker

„ Maganlal K. Gandhi, Secretary of the Board

or those who may be appointed from time to time in their stead by the Council of the Association.

Candidates for the Khadi Service may be admitted for training at the A. I. S. A. Khadi Vidyalaya, Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati and in any other institutions that may be approved by the Council of the Association from time to time.

No one who has not completed his 16th year, who has not a competent knowledge of the vernacular of his province and of arithmetic, and who does not produce a certificate of good conduct and health, shall be admitted for instruction.

Every application for admission shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Board of Studies who will, if he is satisfied with the application, direct the candidate to report himself at any such agency as the Secretary may appoint, and if the agent, after a personal examination, considers the applicant to be a proper person for admission, he will be admitted as a probationer to serve at a work centre for three months. Upon his satisfying his probation, he will be sent for the prosecution of the course of instruction, the travelling expenses to be borne by him.

The course of instruction which shall be for a period of two years shall be prescribed by the Board of Studies and shall include

(a) all the processes that cotton has to go through up to finished cloth,

(b) a knowledge of Hindi (otherwise Hindustani),

(c) a knowledge of book-keeping,

and (d) as far as possible, where the candidate has not

passed through any scholastic training, such general knowledge as may be required for efficient Khadi organisation.

The candidate, if he has a competent knowledge in any of the subjects, may, upon examination, be exempted from going through the course in that subject at the discretion of the authority in the institution and be exempted from instruction for a period in proportion to his knowledge.

When the candidate has obtained a certificate of competency in the foregoing, he will be sent at the expense of the Association to a Khadi Karyalaya in any of the provinces to gain practical experience for a period which may extend to 9 months. Any candidate, who has obtained a satisfactory certificate from the chief authority in the province to which he has been sent for practical training, shall be enrolled as a member of the Khadi service.

Every candidate who wishes to avail himself of the Khadi service shall enter into a contract of service to be framed by the Board by which he shall be bound to serve at least a period of three years and shall not be discharged from service as long as he may thereafter continue to render diligent and faithful service, provided that the head of the province may remove any one for misconduct or inefficiency or other satisfactory cause. There shall be a right of appeal to the Council of the A. I. S. A. whose decision shall be final.

Any person enrolled as a member of the Khadi service will be liable to serve in any place wherever he is required by the Association.

The salary shall be Rs. 30 per month subject to increase after three years up to Rs. 50 by such increments as may be fixed from time to time by the Khadi Service Board appointed by the Association.

Persons who do not wish to join the Khadi service may also be admitted for instruction in the institutions approved by the Association for the purpose. Preference, however, will always be given to those who wish to enter the Khadi service.

There will be a short course of three months for those

who merely want to learn handspinning and all the antecedent processes, that is ginning, carding and sliver making.

Every applicant for instruction whose application has been accepted will be required to deposit return fare for the place from which he or she comes plus Rs. 3 to be utilised for his or her return in the event of his or her being dismissed for any cause whatsoever.

A monthly scholarship of Rs. 12 for board and free lodging shall be given to those candidates for instruction who are found to be too poor to pay for their board. This will be tenable for the period of probation, instruction and practical training. No monetary payment will be made where common boarding arrangements are made.

The Council reserves the right to alter or amend the constitution from time to time, frame by-laws, fix the term of service, enact rules of discipline and deal with other matters not covered by the constitution. Nothing in this constitution shall affect the right of those who are already in the employment of the A. I. S. A.

#### Application for Admission for Training

Name in full

Province, residence and postal address

Age

Sex

Married or unmarried

Children, if any

Dependents if any

Present occupation

School or college attended, if any

(Give details of situations held and periods)

Name and address of the person who has certified to character and health

(Certificate in original to be attached to application) If stipend is wanted, state reasons.

I have read the rules of the Khadi Service and acquainted myself with the nature of the training to be undergone. If

selected for training I shall accept the discipline of the institution to which I am sent and go through the course of instruction.

Signature

Date

Postal address

Contract of service

between

The Council of the All India Spinners' Association on the one part and. . . . (hereinafter called the employee) on the other part.

It is hereby agreed that . . . having undergone the course of instruction and training for Khadi Service and been found fit by the Board of Studies, I shall serve the Association for a period of three years at such centres and in such capacity as may be prescribed for him from time to time at a salary of Rs. 30 per month and shall be bound by the rules of service that have been, or may hereafter be, framed.

After the period of the said three years it shall be open to the employee to retire or continue in the service, the Association being bound to maintain him in the Khadi service for a further period of seven years on the same salary with such increments as may be granted from time to time up to Rs. 50 per month, provided that he renders diligent and faithful service provided always that the employee is liable to be discharged at any time for misconduct, inefficiency or debility through illness or otherwise. The discharge shall be subject to appeal to the Council of the A. I. S. A. The employee binds himself to accept the decision of the Council in all matters relating to this Contract including discharge from service as final. This contract shall cease to operate in the event of the dissolution of the A. I. S. A.

Secretary

All India Spinners' Association

Signature

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# SATYAGRAHA AND NON-VIOLENCE



24th April, 1924

## VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

The anti-untouchability campaign at Vykom is providing an interesting study in Satyagraha and as it is being conducted in a calm spirit, it must prove of great use for future workers along similar lines. The Travancore authorities, whilst they still remain unbending regarding the prohibition order, are carrying out their purpose in a courteous manner. The public already know how quickly the authorities tried to check violence against Satyagrahis. The treatment in the gaols too is in keeping with their conduct in the open. Here is what Mr. Menon writes from Trivandrum Jail:

"The expected has happened. I am now within the walls of the Trivandrum Central Jail along with my friend Mr. Madhavan. We are treated as state prisoners. A separate block is set apart for our use. We are allowed our own clothes. A convict cooks for us. I am having the same food as I take at home. So is my friend Mr. Madhavan. Books and newspapers are also allowed. Of course in writing letters we are not allowed to say anything about the Vykom affair: Friends can see us between 8 A.M. and 4 P.M. every day except Sunday.

I am sure that you would be glad to hear that the Superintendent and other authorities of the Jail are doing everything to make us comfortable. We received from them the same polite treatment as we received from the Police officers at Vykom."

The Travancore Jail authorities deserve to be congratulated upon their considerate treatment of the Satyagrahi prisoners. Let us hope that on either side the present self-restraint and courteous conduct will be continued to the end.

Surprise has been expressed over the advice I have tendered

to the Satyagrahis that whilst Satyagraha continues, the organisers should leave no stone unturned by way of petitions, public meetings, deputations etc., in order to engage the support of the state and public opinion on their side. The critics argue that I am partial to the state authorities because they represent Indian rule, whereas I am hostile to the British authorities because they represent an alien rule. For me every ruler is alien that defies public opinion. In South Africa Indians continued to negotiate with the authorities upto the last moment even though Satyagraha was going on. In British India we are non-co-operating and we are doing so because we are bent on mending or ending the whole system of Government and therefore the method of petition is a hopeless effort.

In Travancore the Satyagrahis are not attacking a whole system. They are not attacking it at any point at all. They are fighting sacerdotal prejudice. The Travancore state comes in by a side door as it were. Satyagrahis would therefore be deviating from their path if they did not try to court junction with the authorities and cultivate public support by means of deputations, meetings etc. Direct action does not always preclude other consistent methods. Nor is petitioning etc. in every case a sign of weakness on the part of a Satyagrahi. Indeed he is no Satyagrahi who is not humble.

I have been also asked to develop the argument against sending aid apart from public sympathy from outside Travancore. I have already stated the utilitarian argument in an interview. But there is a root objection too to getting, indeed even accepting, such support. Satyagraha is either offered by a few self-sacrificing persons in the name of the many weak, or by very few in the face of enormous odds. In the former case, which is the case in Vykom, many are willing but weak, and a few are willing and capable of sacrificing their all for the cause of the untouchables. In such a case it is obvious they need no aid, whatsoever. But suppose that they took outside aid how would it serve the untouchable countrymen? The

weak Hindus in the absence of strong ones rising in their midst will not prevail against the strong opponents. The sacrifice of helpers from other parts of India will not convert the opponents and it is highly likely that the last state of the untouchables will be worse than the first. Let it be remembered that Satyagraha is a most powerful process of conversion. It is an appeal to the heart. Such an appeal cannot be successfully made by people from other parts of India flocking to Vykom.

Nor should a campaign conducted from within need outside monetary support. All the weak but sympathetic Hindus of Travancore may not court arrest and the other suffering, but they can and should render such pecuniary assistance as may be needed. I could not understand their sympathy without such support.

In the case too of a very few offering Satyagraha against heavy odds, outside support is not permissible. Public Satyagraha is an extension of private or domestic Satyagraha. Every instance of public Satyagraha should be tested by imagining a parallel domestic case. Thus suppose in my family I wish to remove the curse of untouchability. Suppose further that my parents oppose the view, that I have the fire of the conviction of Prahlad, that my father threatens penalties, calls in even the assistance of the state to punish me. What should I do? May I invite my friends to suffer with me the penalties my father has devised for me? Or is it not upto me, meekly to bear all the penalties my father inflicts on me and absolutely rely on the law of suffering and love to melt his heart and open his eyes to the evil of untouchability? It is open to me to bring in the assistance of learned men, the friends of the family, to explain to my father what he may not understand from me his child. But I may allow no one to share with me the privilege and the duty of suffering. What is true of this supposed case of domestic Satyagraha is equally true and no less of the case we have imagined of public Satyagraha. Whether therefore the Vykom Satyagrahis represent a hopeless minority or as I have been informed a majority of the Hindus

concerned, it is clear that they should avoid aid from outside save that of public sympathy. That in every such case we may not be able to conform to the law, that in the present case too, we may not be able to do so may be true. Let us not however forget the law and let us conform to it as far as ever we can.

### CASE OF CHIRALA PERALA

Let me quote one case in which I had the honour of advising. I refer to the case of Chirala Perala. The citizen's claim was that they were a united body and prepared to suffer. What I witnessed was a wonderful exhibition of cohesion, courage and extremely able and daring leadership. I said that I could not advise the Congress or the public to give pecuniary support. I could not advise the Congress even to encourage them by passing resolutions. If they won, the Congress would claim credit for the success of the means adopted by it. If they failed, the Congress will share no discredit. The people understood and accepted the advice. Even after three years' careful consideration I have no reason to revise the advice then tendered. On the contrary I feel sure that if we are to grow to our full height, we shall do so only by punctiliously observing the laws of the game.

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*1st May, 1924*

### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

Vykom Satyagraha has attracted such wide public attention, and though restricted to a small area, presents so many problems for solution that I offer no apology to the reader for constantly engaging his attention for it.

I have received several important and well thought out letters protesting against my countenancing it in any way

whatsoever. One such letter even urges me to use whatever influence I may have, for stopping it altogether. I am sorry that I am unable to publish all these letters. But I hope to cover all the points raised in these letters or otherwise brought to my notice.

The first may be cleared at once. Exception has been taken to Mr. George Joseph—a Christian—having been allowed to replace Mr. Menon as leader and organiser. In my humble opinion the exception is perfectly valid. As soon as I heard that Mr. Joseph was ‘invited to take the lead’ and he contemplated taking it, I wrote to him as follows on 6th April :

“As to Vykom I think that you shall let the Hindus do the work. It is they who have to purify themselves. You can help by your sympathy and by your pen, but not by organising the movement and certainly not by offering Satyagraha. If you refer to the Congress resolution of Nagpur, it calls upon the Hindu members to remove the curse of untouchability. I was surprised to learn from Mr. Andrews that the disease had infected even the Syrian Christians.”

Unfortunately before the letter could reach him, Mr. Menon was arrested and Mr. George Joseph had taken his place. But he had nothing to expiate, as every Hindu has in the matter of untouchability as countenanced by the Hindus. His sacrifice cannot be appropriated by the Hindus in general as expiation made, say by Malaviyaji would be. Untouchability is the sin of the Hindus. They must suffer for it, they must purify themselves, they must pay the debt they owe their suppressed brothers and sisters. Theirs is the shame and theirs must be the glory when they have purged themselves of the black sin. The silent loving suffering of one single pure Hindu as such will be enough to melt the heart of millions of Hindus: but the sufferings of thousands of non-Hindus in behalf of the untouchables will leave the Hindus unmoved. Their blind eyes will be opened by outside interference, however well-intentioned and generous it may be; for it will not bring home to them the sense of guilt. On the contrary, they would probably hug the



sin all the more for such interference. All reform to be sincere and lasting must come from within.

But why may the Vykom Satyagrahis not receive monetary aid from outside, especially if it be from Hindus? So far as non-Hindu assistance is concerned, I am as clear about such pecuniary help as I am about such personal help. I may not build my Hindu temple with non-Hindu money. If I desire a place of worship I must pay for it. This removal of untouchability is much more than building a temple of brick and mortar. Hindus must bleed for it, must pay for it. *They* must be prepared to forsake wife, children and all for the sake of removing the curse. As for accepting assistance from Hindus from outside such acceptance would betray unreadiness on the part of the local Hindus for the reform. If the Satyagrahis have the sympathy of the local Hindus, they must get locally all the money they may need. If they have not, the very few who may offer Satyagraha must be content to starve. If they are not, it is clear that they will evoke no sympathy among the local Hindus whom they want to convert. Satyagraha is a process of conversion. The reformers, I am sure, do not seek to force their views upon the community; they strive to touch its heart. Outside pecuniary help must interfere with the love process if I may so describe the method of Satyagraha. Thus viewed the proposed Sikh free kitchen, I can only regard, as a menace to the frightened Hindus of Vykom.

There is no doubt in my mind about it that the orthodox Hindus who still think that worship of God is inconsistent with touching a portion of their own co-religionists and that a religious life is summed up in ablutions and avoidance of physical pollutions merely, are alarmed at the developments of the movement at Vykom. They believe that their religion is in danger. It behoves the organisers therefore, to set even the most orthodox and the most bigoted at ease and to assure them that they do not seek to bring about the reform by compulsion. The Vykom Satyagrahis must stoop to conquer. They must

submit to insults and worse at the hands of the bigoted and yet love them, if they will change their hearts.

But a telegram says in effect, 'the authorities are barricading the roads; may we not break or scale the fences? May we not fast? For we find that fasting is effective.'

My answer is, if we are Satyagrahis, we dare not scale or break fences. Breaking or scaling fences will certainly bring about imprisonment but the breaking will not be civil disobedience. It will be essentially incivil and criminal. Nor may we fast. I observe that my letter to Mr. Joseph with reference to fasting has been misunderstood. For the sake of ready reference I reproduce below the relevant part :

"Omit fasting but stand or squat in relays with quiet submission till arrested."

The above is the wire sent to you in reply to yours. Fasting in Satyagraha has well-defined limits. You cannot fast against a tyrant, for it will be a species of violence done to him. You invite penalty from him for disobedience of his orders but you cannot inflict on yourselves penalties when he refuses to punish and renders it impossible for you to disobey his orders so as to compel infliction of penalty. Fasting can only be resorted to against a lover, not to extort rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a father who drinks. My fast at Bombay and then at Bardoli was of that character. I fasted to reform those who loved me. But I will not fast to reform, say, General Dyer, who not only does not love me but who regards himself as my enemy. Am I quite clear?"

It need not be pointed out that the above remarks are of a general character. The words 'tyrant' and 'lover' have also a general application. The one who does an injustice is styled 'tyrant.' The one who is in sympathy with you is the 'lover.' In my opinion, in the Vykom movement opponents of the reform are the 'tyrant.' The State may or may not be that. In this connection I have considered the State as merely the police striving to keep the peace. In no case is the State or the opponents in the position of 'lover'. The supporters of

Vykom Satyagrahis enjoy that status. There are two conditions attached to a Satyagrahi fast. It should be against the lover and for his reform, not for extorting rights from him. The only possible case in the Vykom movement when a fast will be justified, would be when the local supporters go back upon their promise to suffer. I can fast against my father to cure him of a vice but I may not in order to get from him an inheritance. The beggars of India who sometimes fast against those who do not satisfy them are no more Satyagrahis than children who fast against a parent for a fine dress. The former are impudent, the latter are childish. My Bardoli fast was against fellow-workers who ignited the Chauri Chaura spark and for the sake of reforming them. If the Vykom Satyagrahis fast because the authorities will not arrest them, it will be, I must say in all humility, the beggar's fast described above. If it proves effective it shows the goodness of the authorities, not that of the cause or of the actors. A Satyagrahi's first concern is not the effect of his action. It must always be its propriety. He must have faith enough in his cause and his means, and know that success will be achieved in the end.

Some of my correspondents object altogether to Satyagraha in an India State. In this matter too, let me quote the remaining portion of my foregoing letter to Mr. Joseph :

"You must be patient. You are in an Indian State. Therefore, you may wait in deputation on the Dewan and the Maharaja. Get up a monster petition by the orthodox Hindus who may be well-disposed towards the movement. See also those who are opposing. You can support the gentle direct action in a variety of ways. You have already drawn public attention to the matter by preliminary Satyagraha. Above all see to it that it neither dies nor by impatience becomes violent."

Satyagraha in an Indian State by the Congress for the attainment of its object is I think clearly forbidden. But Satyagraha in an Indian State in connection with local abuses may be legitimately taken up at any time provided the other necessary conditions are fulfilled. As in an Indian State there

can be no question of non-co-operation, the way of petitions and deputations is not only always open, but it is obligatory. But, say some of my correspondents, the conditions for lawful Satyagraha do not exist in Vykom. They ask:

1. Is unapproachability exclusively observed at Vykom or is it general throughout Kerala?
2. If it is general, then what is the special reason for selecting Vykom in preference to places within the British territory in Kerala.
3. Did the Satyagrahis petition the Maharaja, the local Assembly &c.?
4. Did they consult the orthodox sections?
5. Is not the use of the road the thin end of the wedge, is it not a step towards the abolition of caste altogether?
6. Is not the road a private road?

The first two questions are irrelevant. Unapproachability and untouchability have to be tackled wherever they exist. Wherever the workers consider a place or a time suitable, it is their duty to start work whether by Satyagraha or other legitimate means.

My information goes to show that the method of petition &c., was tried not once but often.

They did consult the orthodox people and thought that they had the latter's support.

I am assured that the use of the road is the final goal of the Satyagrahis. It is however not to be denied that the present movement throughout India is to throw open to the suppressed classes all the *public* roads, *public* schools, *public* wells and *public* temples which are accessible to non-Brahmins.

It is in fact a movement to purify caste by ridding it of its most pernicious result. I personally believe in *Varnashram*, though it is true that I have my own meaning for it. Any way, anti-untouchability movement does not aim at inter-dining or inter-marrying. Those who mix up the touch and the last two things together are doing harm to the cause of the suppressed classes as also to that of inter-dining and inter-marriage.

I have letters which protest that the road in question is a public road. In fact my informants tell me it was some years ago even accessible to the unapproachables as to other non-Brahmins.

In my opinion, therefore, there is a just cause for the Vykom Satyagraha and so far as it is kept within proper limits and conducted with the strictest regard to non-violence and truth, it deserves full-public sympathy.

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*8th May, 1924*

### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

The Vykom Satyagraha is, I fear, crossing the limits. I do hope that the Sikh free kitchen will be withdrawn and that the movement will be confined to Hindus only. Its inclusion in the Congress programme no more makes it a movement of Hindus and non-Hindus than the Khilafat became a Muslim and non-Muslim movement by reason of its inclusion in the Congress programme. Moreover the opponents of the Khilafat movement were non-Muslims represented by the British Government. It would be an intrusion, which Mussalmans would rightly regard as impertinent, if Hindus or other non-muslims interfered in an inter-communal religious dispute among themselves. Similarly would orthodox Hindus resent interference by others in what is purely Hindu reform. The Hindu reformers of Malabar will estrange the entire Hindu sympathy if they accept or encourage non-Hindu interference or assistance beyond sympathy. I am sure that the Hindu reformers who are leading the movement in Vykom do not want to convert their orthodox brethren by compulsion. In any case let them recognise the boundary line which a Satyagrahi must not cross. I respectfully urge the reformers not to overawe the orthodox. I dissent from the view that once the disputed road to Vykom is free the problem of untouch-

ability is solved even in Malabar. Victory in Vykombathur if non-violent, will no doubt shake the citadel of sacerdotal superstition in general, but the problem will have to be everywhere locally tackled wherever it arises. Because a well in one place in Gujarat is thrown open for the use of the untouchables, it does not follow that all the wells in Gujarat will be opened for their use. And how would it fare with Hinduism if the Christian, the Muslim, the Akali, and other non-Hindu friends of the Hindu reformers made a demonstration against the orthodox Hindus, financed the reformers and finally overawed the orthodox into subjection? Will that be Satyagraha, will submission then be voluntary, will it be a reform in Hinduism?

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*22nd May, 1926*

## ARE SIKHS HINDUS?

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend from the Punjab writes ;

"The Akalis here are more or less enraged at your note about Vykombathur in which you class them with Mussalmans and Christians as non-Hindus. I have had many people complaining to me that the Sikhs never formally dissociated themselves from Hinduism. And as for some people refusing to be called Hindus, it is pointed out that Swami Shraddhanand himself some time ago took strong exception to be called a Hindu. Several prominent members of the S. G. P. C. are members of the Hindu Sabha; and though undoubtedly there is a feeling among one section of Akalis that it is better to disclaim all connection with Hinduism, there is an equally strong section which is conservative on this matter. Of course they want their temples separated from general Hindu temples and to be under their own control. But this is the case with all Hindu sects. The Jains so far as I am told, have the same right; and it is pointed out to me that the Sikhs are claiming no more than the Aryas, Brahmos and others not belonging to the orthodox Hindu traditions claim. After close acquaintance with the Sikh leaders

here and with some study of the Sikh movement I myself feel that to class Akahs as non-Hindu is not entirely fair to them."

I am very glad to find that Sikh friends recent my classing them with non-Hindus. I assure them that I had no such intention whatsoever. During my first tour in the Punjab, I happened to say in speaking of the Sikhs that in my opinion they were a part of the Hindu community. I did so, because I knew that millions of Hindus believed in Guru Nanak and that the Granth Sahab was filled with the Hindu spirit and Hindu legends. But a Sikh friend who was present at the meetings took me aside and said with gravest concern that my inclusion of the Sikhs in the Hindu community had given offence, and the friend advised me in future never to speak of the Sikhs in the same breath as Hindus. During my tour in the Punjab I found that the caution given by the friend was well-given. For I noticed that many Sikhs regarded themselves as belonging to a religion distinct from Hinduism. I promised the friend never again to refer to the Sikhs as Hindus. Nothing would, therefore, please me better than to find that the separatist tendency is confined only to a very few Sikhs and that the general body regard themselves as Hindus. I have met with the same fate from Arya Samajists. An innocent reference to them as being part of Hindus, was also resented. One gentleman felt insulted when without the slightest intention of hurting his feelings I referred to him as a Hindu I soothed him by immediate apology I have not fared much better with some Jains. During my tour in Maharashtra, I found many Jains telling me that they were a community apart from Hindus. I have never understood the Jain objection, because there is so much in common between Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. I could some what understand the Arya Samaj objection, because the Samajists are, if one may say so without giving offence, fanatically hostile to idol-worship and Pauranic literature and everything outside the Vedas and the Upanishads. But Jainism and Buddhism have so far as I know no such quarrel with Hinduism. Indeed Buddhism and Jainism are mighty reforms in Hinduism.

Buddhism rightly insisted on internal purity. Its appeal went straight to the heart. It broke down arrogant assumption of superiority. Jainism represents the highest flight of logic. It has taken nothing for granted and has endeavoured to prove metaphysical truth by challenging the intellect. In my opinion we have hardly touched the vast literature that these two reform movements have produced.

Holding the views I do, I hope my Sikh friends will appreciate the fact that if I have classed them as non-Hindus it is out of delicate regard for their feelings and against my own inclination. So far as the Sikh kitchen is concerned it is a menace whether the Sikhs may be regarded as Hindus or non-Hindus. All this outside intrusion—for I cannot call it anything less—takes no note of the orthodox sensitiveness or the difficulty of the Durbar. And now that I have learnt the facts more fully about the Sikh kitchen I cannot help saying that it compromises the self respect of the Kerala people. They are not living in starvation. If I was a volunteer, I would rather starve than be fed by outside charity whether Hindu or non-Hindu. Surely the Kerala people must be trusted to see to the feeding of their volunteers.

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*19th June, 1924*

### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

His Holiness Sri Narayan Guru spiritual leader of the Tiyas is reported to have disapproved of the present methods of satyagraha at Vykom. He suggests that volunteers should advance along barricaded roads and scale the barricades. They should enter temples and sit with others to dine. Though I have compressed the interview I have reproduced almost the exact words. Now the action proposed is not satyagraha. For scaling barricades is open violence. If you may scale barricades why not break open temple doors and even pierce through temple walls? How are volunteers to pierce through a row of



policemen except by using physical force? I do not for one moment suggest that by the methods proposed, the Tiya if they are strong and are willing to die in sufficient numbers cannot gain their point. All I submit is that they will have gained it by something the reverse of satyagraha; and then too they would not have converted the orthodox to their view but would have imposed it on them by force. A friend who has sent me the press cutting recording the interview suggests that by reason of the violent advice of the Guru I should ask the local Congress committee to call off satyagraha. I feel that would mean want of faith in one's means and surrender to violence. So long as the organisers strictly keep within the limits which they have prescribed for themselves there is no cause for calling off satyagraha. The friend cites Chauri Choura as an illustration. In doing so, he has betrayed confusion of thought or ignorance of facts. The Bardoli satyagraha was suspended because Congress and Khilafat men were implicated in the Chauri Chaura outrage. If congressmen connected with the Vykom movement entertain the suggestions said to be favoured by the Tiya spiritual leader, there would be a case for penance and therefore suspension but not otherwise. I would therefore urge the organisers at Vykom to make redoubled efforts and at the same time keep stricter watch on the conduct of those who take part in the movement. Whether it takes long or short to reach the goal, the way is the way of peaceful conversion of the orthodox by self-suffering and self-purification and no other. M. K. G.

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*26th June, 1924*

## THE AKALI STRUGGLE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The public were hoping that the negotiations going on between the Akali leaders and the Punjab Government would bear fruit and that the Gurudwara question would be satisfactorily settled and that the sufferings of the Akalis would end.

But if the S. G. P. C. is to be relied upon, the Government had willed otherwise. The Akali leaders, it is stated, were all that could be wished, but the Government would not even promise to release those prisoners who are now undergoing imprisonment, not for violence actually committed or contemplated, but practically for having taken part in the Gurudwara agitation.

The Akali struggle will therefore in all probability be prosecuted with greater vigour. The Government will also probably adopt more repressive measures. Fortunately we have now become inured to repression. It has ceased to terrify us. The Akalis have shown the stuff of which they are made.

Let us see what they have already suffered, for what to them is a deeply religious question. I will say nothing of the Nankhana tragedy, the Keys affair, the Guru-ka-Bagh brutality or the Jaito firing. I will not also say anything about S.G.P.C. being declared an unlawful association. The Congress has regarded it as a challenge to all public bodies that may be against the Government. Since the Jaito firing the Akalis, recognising that their passive resistance to arrest was capable of being misunderstood for violence, have been regularly sending to Jaito Shahidi Jathas of 500 men generally every fortnight for quiet and submissive arrest. These allow themselves to be arrested without any opposition whatsoever. They on their arrest are sent by special train to what is said to be a jungle and there detained without any trial, without any charge. Dry rations are provided which they have to cook for themselves. The jungle which is supposed to be malarial and over-grown with grass passes muster for a prison. I understand that a few have died of fevers due to exposure and malarial climate. Over 3,000 prisoners are suffering in this fashion. Besides the Shahidi Jathas smaller ones of 25 each have been crossing over to Jaito daily for the past nine months. They are taken to a station called Bawal and left there to shift for themselves. There Akalis often undergo severe hardships before reaching their destination. And so the awful routine goes on with clock-work regularity without apparently producing any impression on the authorities.

Why do these Jathas suffer thus? Simply for the sake of performing the *Akhand path* ceremony which was rudely interrupted by the Nabha authorities and whose performance is even now being prevented. The Akalis have repeatedly stated that whilst they claim the right to demand and secure for the Maharaja of Nabha an impartial and open inquiry, they do not want to use *Akhand path* as a cloak to carry on any agitation in his favour. Why the *Akhand path* is prevented no one can tell except that it is sought to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis which has organised and is carrying on the reform movement.

The demands of the Akalis seem to be absolutely simple. So far as I am aware they are :—

1. Possession of historical Gurudwaras by a central body elected by the Sikhs.
2. Right of every Sikh to possess a *Kirpan* of any size.
3. Right of performing the *Akhand path* in Jaito.

On the face of it, every one of these demands is unexceptionable and should be recognised for the asking.

No community has shown so much bravery, sacrifice and skill in the prosecution of its object as the Akalis. No community has maintained the passive spirit so admirably as they. Any other Government but the Indian would long ago have recognised the demands and the sacrifice of the Akalis and turned them from opponents into its voluntary supporters. But the Indian Government would not evoke the spirit of universal opposition which it has, if it had cared for and respected public opinion.

The duty of the Hindu, Mussalman, and other sister communities is clear. They must help the reformers with their moral support and let the Government know unequivocally that in the matter above-named the Akalis have the moral support of the whole of India. I know that the distrust that pervades the Indian atmosphere has not left the Akalis free from the contagion. The Hindus, and possibly the Mussalmans, distrust their intentions. They regard their activity with suspicion.

Ulterior motives and ambition for the establishment of Sikh Raj are imputed to them. The Akalis have disclaimed any such intention. As a matter of fact, no disclaimer is necessary, and none can prevent such an attempt being made in the future. A solemn declaration made by all the Sikhs can easily be thrown on the scrap-heap, if ever their successors entertain any such unworthy ambition. The safety lies only in the determination of us all to work for the freedom of all. From a practical standpoint too, moral support of the reform movement, it is clear, reduces the chances of unworthy ambition being harboured in the Sikh breast. As a matter of fact, any such mutual suspicion necessarily hinders the Swaraj movement for it prevents hearty co-operation between the communities and thus consolidates the forces of exploitation of this fair land and perhaps even makes possible an ambition which is at present clearly impossible. We must therefore judge each communal movement on its merits and give it ungrudging support when it is in itself sound, and the means employed for its conduct are honourable, open and peaceful.

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*10th July, 1924*

### A REPUDIATION

With reference to the reported interview with the Tiya priest Shri Narayana Guruswami I gladly publish the following letter from Mr. Narayanan :

“ I was very much pained to see your note in ‘ Young India ’ regarding the views of His Holiness Shri Narayana Guru Swami on the present methods of Satyagraha at Vykom. A few days before that I happened to see the Swamiji with whom I had a fairly long conversation over the Vykom struggle. The Swamiji himself told me at the outset that one Mr. Kesavan who had a talk with him sometime back in a railway train has misrepresented him to the public by publishing an unauthorised account of the so-called interview in the vernacular press.

First of all Swamiji is not in the habit of granting interviews to press representatives. But he freely expresses his opinions to whom-so-ever he talks with on any subject. Very recently Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari also had a free talk with the Swamiji on the Vykom affairs; and it is said that the Swamiji expressed himself in unmistakeable terms his approval of the present methods of Satyagraha at Vykom.

What the Swamiji says is this. It is true that he spoke in favour of entering temples and sitting with others to dine; because he has always been an advocate of temple entry and interdining. But he lays great stress on non-violence. He says that even advancing into the prohibited area in the absence of barricades is an act of violence, because the prohibitory board at the boundary line carrying the Government order itself is equivalent to a barricade of policemen who simply repeat the same order as volunteers advance. He is of opinion that so long as the prohibitory board is there, the volunteers should remain at the boundary line praying God to give courage to the oppositionists to change their mind and cause the removal of the board. He might have told Mr. Kesavan that if the volunteers may advance into the prohibitory area disobeying the Government order put up in the prohibitory board, they may as well scale the barricades and advance. This, the Swamiji says, might have been misunderstood by Mr. Kesavan. He drew my special attention to the fact that the volunteers must be of exemplary character, and that they must not even show signs of distemper at the greatest provocation. The Swamiji also expressed the view that the proposed procession on foot of 500 caste Hindus from Vykom to Trivandram will produce a great moral effect on all concerned. Lastly he wished all success to the movement saying that, if carried on in the same strain as at present, success is not far off."

After the foregoing was prepared I received the following authoritative letter:

"The report of the interview K. M. Kesavan had with me

in the railway train, published in the *Desabhimani*, seems to have been prepared without correctly understanding my meaning. That report was not shown to me before publication nor did I see it soon after it was published. The removal of untouchability is quite essential for the attainment of social harmony. I have no objection whatsoever to the Satyagraha movement started by Mahatma Gandhi to fight this evil nor to the co-operation of people in that movement. Any method of work that may be adopted for eradicating the evil of untouchability must be strictly non-violent."

Muttakkadu )  
27-6-1924 )

Narayana Guru

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*14th August, 1924*

### ORTHODOX PROTEST

The President of Savarna Mahajan Sabha at Vykom sends me a letter enclosing resolution protesting against my countenancing Satyagraha at Vykom and urging me to stop it. The writer tells me that I have been misled by my informants. I have endeavoured to study both the sides impartially and I have come to the conclusion that the Satyagrahis have on the whole been scrupulously correct in their conduct and that they have been sustaining the struggle under trying circumstances. I am sorry to say that I am therefore unable to satisfy the orthodox friends and advise withdrawal of Satyagraha.

M. K. G.

### QUIET WORK

Again how is it possible to advise stoppage of a movement which shows so much grit as is described in the following from the same letter?

"In spite of the bad weather conditions, no effort is spared in the charkha work in the Ashram. Almost all the volunteers know to spin well and the charkhas are being

sent to the barricades except during heavy showers. Half the number have learnt to card and I am making it compulsory that the spinners must use their own carded cotton. Tape-making is also going on. Ere long we will set up a loom."

I must respectfully refuse to believe that cultured young men doing such honest work in the faith that it purifies them and helps them in their struggle against passion and prejudice can possibly deceive the public or me. They have no interest in so doing. For their faith is in their work.

### IT MELTS STONES

But the president of the meeting in his letter says, 'You seem to think that Satyagraha when offered to a brother will gradually melt away the opposition of the latter and win him over to the side of the satyagrahi. This is not our experience here.' I do not wonder that the hearts of the orthodox have not yet been touched by the sufferings of the Satyagrahis. They have not suffered long enough yet nor intensely enough. Even suffering cannot be manufactured. They must take whatever God may have in store for them. If He wants them to have to linger away in suffering, they must submit to it cheerfully. They dare not shirk the severest trial nor may they dare stage-play suffering. That was one of my reasons against the Sikh friends resisting arrests and inviting fire. My uniform experience is that true suffering melts the stoniest hearts. With my own eldest brother, it took fully thirteen years. I do not reproduce all the letters I receive from English friends. But some of them are humble recognitions of the evil done (true enough in ignorance) by the English rulers. What are these recognitions if they are not in conscious response to suffering? Nothing can shake me from the conviction that, given a good cause, suffering for its sake advances it as nothing else has ever done. To the orthodox Hindus I need not point out the sovereign efficacy of *tapasya*. And Satyagraha is nothing but *tapasya* for Truth.

## A DISTURBING ITEM

There is however in the president's letter a disturbing item-I must give it in his own words as follows :

"I bring to your notice an incident that took place at Chenganur under the auspices of the adherents of the Congress party on 6th July, 1924. This was a Savarna meeting announced to be held at the place. A representative of our committee was also invited to attend. By the machinations of a mischievous clique, the meeting was subjected to a set of resolutions which were quite contrary to the propositions adopted for presentation at the meeting. Our representative and several other Savarna members immediately left the hall and called up another meeting composed of very respectable caste-Hindus at the residence of the Vanjipozhey chief, the premier land-lord of Chenganur. Leave this alone, however gruesome and treacherous the tactics be. What we painfully deplore is that an organised attempt was made to vilify and hoot him and to lay hands on him if possible. He had to come away from the place without giving scent of his departure. This incident I refer to you just to bring to your notice the manner in which Congress propagandism is pursued in Travancore now."

I ask the conductors of the campaign to send me an explanation which I shall gladly print. They will not, I trust, hesitate to admit the error if any has been committed.

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*21st August, 1924*

## NEGROES' SYMPATHY

I gladly publish and gratefully acknowledge the following cable from New York.

"The Negroes of the world through us send you greetings for fight for the freedom of your people and country. We are



with you. Fourth annual international convention Negro peoples of the world. MARIUS GARNEY CHAIRMAN."

Theirs is perhaps a task more difficult than ours. But they have some very fine workers among them. Many students of history consider that the future is with them. They have fine physique. They have a glorious imagination. They are as simple as they are brave. Mons. Finot has shown by his scientific researches that there is in them no inherent inferiority as is commonly supposed to be the case. All they need is opportunity. I know that if they have caught the spirit of the Indian movement, their progress must be rapid. M. K. G.

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*11th September, 1924*

#### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

I tender my congratulations to the Maharani Regent of Travancore on her generosity in releasing all the Satyagrahi prisoners. It is a pretty custom for a State to release a certain number of prisoners on a new head occupying the *gadi*. What can be more natural than that those prisoners who have no criminal taint in them should be released? I tender too my congratulations to the Satyagrahis on suspending Satyagrah for the time being. It paves the way for an understanding and enables the State authorities to review their attitude towards the Satyagrahis without embarrassment. It has been stated that the late Maharaja, most enlightened though he was in many matters, held very orthodox views on untouchability. Let me hope that H.H. the Maharani Regent will recognise that untouchability is no credit to Hinduism, but that it is a serious blot upon it. The best service that a Hindu State can render to Hinduism is to rid it of the curse and set an example in liberalism to the Hindus of British India. The Satyagrahis will, I doubt not, make the way of the authorities smooth by continuing their self-restraint and making it clear that they do not want anything more than a recognition of the most

elementary human rights for the unapproachables and the untouchables.

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*18th September, 1924*

## VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

The Vykom Satyagraha has perhaps a meaning deeper than is generally realised. The young men who have organised it are stern in discipline and gentle in their dealings with the orthodox section. But this is the least part of their trials. Some of them are suffering too the persecution of social boycott. We of the western presidency have no idea of what this persecution can mean. These young men who are taking part in the movement are not only being denied social amenities but are threatened even with the deprivation of their share in the family property. If they would go to law, probably they would get their due. But a Satyagrahi cannot go to law for a personal wrong. He sets out with the idea of suffering persecution. In a reform that the Vykom struggle seeks to achieve, the Satyagrahi seeks to convert his opponent by sheer force of character and suffering. The purer he is and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress. He must therefore resign himself to being excommunicated, debarred from the family privileges and deprived of his share in the family property. He must not only bear such hardships cheerfully but he must actively love his persecutors. The latter honestly believe that the reformer is doing something sinful and therefore resort to the only means they know to be effective to wean him from his supposed error. The Satyagrahi on the other hand does not seek to carry out his reform by a system of punishments but by penance, self-purification and suffering. Any resentment of the persecution, therefore, would be an interruption of the course of discipline he has imposed upon himself. It may be a prolonged course, it may even seem to be never ending. A little bullying or even, moral persuasion

or coercion may appear more expeditious. What, however, I am showing here is not the greater efficacy of Satyagraha but the implications of the method the Satyagrahi has deliberately chosen for himself. Indeed I have often shown in these pages that Satyagraha is, as a matter of fact and in the long run the most expeditious course. But my purpose here is merely to show what the young Satyagrahis of Vykom are doing. The public know much of what they are doing in the shape of picketing but they know nothing of the silent suffering some of them are undergoing at the hands of their families and caste-men. But I know that it is this silent and loving suffering which will finally break the wall of prejudice. I am anxious therefore that the reformers should realise their responsibility to the full and not swerve by a hairs' breadth from their self-imposed discipline.

M. K. G.

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*18th December, 1924*

### PATRIOTISM RUN MAD

BY M. K. GANDHI

If it is true that certain Mulshipeta 'Satyagrahis' have wrecked a train taking labourers to Tata's works, injured the engine driver and slashed about labourers including women, it is a crime worthy of the highest condemnation. These offenders against law, order and decency are said to have declared themselves at war against Tatas and to have said that by waylaying the poor coolies they expect to stop the works in course of construction. This is terrorism in a cause supposed to be good. But all terrorism is bad whether put up in a good cause or bad. As a matter of fact every cause is good in the estimation of its champion, General Dyer (and he had thousands of Englishmen and women who honestly thought with him) enacted Jallianwala Bag for a cause which he un-

doubtedly believed to be good. He thought that by that one act he had saved English lives and the Empire. That it was all a figment of his imagination cannot affect the valuation of the intensity of his conviction. Lords Lytton and Reading honestly believe that the Swaraj party of Bengal is steeped in violence. But their terrorism cannot be justified on the score of the honesty of their motives. The cause that these mad Mulshipeta 'Satyagrahis' hold to be just and good, the Tatas and their supporters genuinely believe to be wicked. They are honestly of opinion that their scheme will benefit the surrounding villages, that they have paid full compensation to the parties dispossessed, that the latter have voluntarily vacated their holdings and that their scheme will be a boon to Bombay and that therefore those who seek to thwart the scheme are enemies of progress. They are as much entitled to this belief as I am to mine that the scheme will not benefit the people in the neighbourhood, that it will spoil the natural beauty of the place, that the poor villagers had no mind of their own and could therefore hardly be said to have voluntarily vacated their holdings, that no compensation is an adequate consideration for vacating a possession which sentiment has hallowed and that it is a debatable question if the scheme will be a boon to Bombay. But immediately I arrogate to myself the exclusive title to being in the right, I usurp the function of the Deity. And there being no absolute and universal standard of right, terrorism must be held to be wrong in every case. In other words pure motives can never justify impure or violent action. I am therefore unable to congratulate the offenders even on their voluntary surrender to the authorities. This surrender is no mitigation of the crime. It may easily be simple bravado. The murderer of a lady the other day in Kirkee could not save himself from the gallows because he surrendered himself after the murder. The assault upon the innocent women who were earning an honest livelihood was an unpardonable wickedness. The self-styled friends of the Mulshi villagers had a perfect right, if they had wished, to go to the labourers and by argu-

ment wean them from labouring for the Tatas. But they had no right to take the law into their own hands. They have damaged a good cause by adopting the wrong method of terrorism and alienated what public sympathy they had. Terrorism set up by reformers may be just as bad as Government terrorism and it is often worse because it draws a certain amount of false sympathy. I heard a lady haranguing upon the self-sacrifice of revolutionaries and visibly moving the audience. A little reflection would however show that self-sacrifice must not be allowed to excuse a crime. Not even self-immolation can be allowed to support a bad or an immoral cause. He would be a weak father who would permit his child to play with fire because the child is hunger-striking for the permission. The youths who the other day very nearly murdered near Calcutta an innocent taxi-driver deserve no sympathy because they were robbing the driver for helping the cause of the country and because they were risking their lives in the attempt. Those who are betrayed into showing sympathy for such misguided youths are harming the country and doing no service to the youths.

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*19th February, 1925*

### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

Here is a letter from a Vykomm Satyagrahi:—

“Your kind card to hand. The Travancore Legislative Council yesterday voted by 22 against 21 against the right of entry to the Vykomm temple road for which purpose Satyagraha is now being offered. Naturally people here are very much agitated and feel aggrieved all the more, because the voting was gained by the direct pressure brought by the Government on the voters. I am ashamed to say, one member of the Depressed and Prohibited Classes himself voted against the

entry and sided with the Government. The situation hereafter is fraught with all kinds of difficulties. There is very little enthusiasm now for the peaceful methods of Satyagraha. Some have already begun to advocate "direct action" and even forcible entry into temples. Small-pox has broken out in the Satyagraha Camp itself and with the growing heat of the advancing summer it may attack more and more. We are carrying the struggle with faith in your leadership and gospel of non-violence. But I am afraid the Provincial Congress Committee of Kerala is waning in its enthusiasm. They have collected very little money during the last many months by their own efforts. For everything we depend on your own esteemed help and advice. We are hard up for money. All Satyagrahis are anxiously awaiting your forthcoming visit which would, it is needless to say, be of inestimable help to our cause."

It is a good letter because it is a frank letter. I am unable to congratulate the Travancore Government, if the facts are as stated. But I do not know them. I therefore suspend my judgment till I know them first hand. I am eager to visit Vykom at the earliest possible date. I hope that it will not be long.

Meanwhile, Satyagrahis must not be dejected. They dare not give way to despair. 'Of all my Tamil lessons one proverb atleast abides with me as an evergreen. Its literal meaning is, 'God is the only Help for the helpless.' The grand theory of Satyagraha is built upon a belief in that truth. Hindu religious literature, indeed all religious literature, is full of illustrations to prove the truth. The Travancore Durbar may have failed them. I may fail them. But God will never fail them, if they have faith in Him. Let them know that they are leaning on a broken reed if they are relying on me. I am living at a safe distance from them. I may wipe their tears, but suffering is their sole privilege. And victory will surely come out of their sufferings provided they are pure. God tries His votaries through and through, but never beyond endurance.

He gives them strength enough to go through the ordeal. He prescribes for them. For the Satyagrahis of Vykom their Satyagraha is not a mere experiment to be given up if it does not succeed within a prescribed time or after a prescribed force of suffering. There is no time limit for a Satyagrahi nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering. Hence there is no such thing as defeat in Satyagraha. Their so-called defeat may be the dawn of victory. It may be the agony of birth.

The Vykom Satyagrahis are fighting a battle of no less consequence than that of Swaraj. They are fighting against an age-long wrong and prejudice. It is supported by orthodoxy, superstition, custom and authority. Theirs is only one among the many battles that must be fought in the holy war against irreligion masquerading as religion, ignorance appearing in the guise of learning. If their battle is to be bloodless, they must be patient under the severest trials. They must not quail before a raging fire.

The Congress Committee may give them no help. They may get no pecuniary help, they may have to serve. Their faith must shine through all these dark trials.

Theirs is 'direct action'. They dare not be irritated against their opponents. They know no better. They are not all dishonest men as Satyagrahis are not all honest men. They are resisting what they honestly believe to be an encroachment upon their religion. The Vykom Satyagraha is the argument of suffering. The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice.

I am alarmed at the appearance of small pox in the Satyagraha Camp. It is a disease born of filth and yields to hygienic treatment. They must isolate small pox patients and discover the cause of the disease. Is their camp in a perfectly sanitary condition? Doctors have no medicine for small-pox. Water cure is the best cure. Low diet or no diet is the safest. Let the patients have copious draughts of pure water. Above all neither the patients nor the others should lose nerve.

The disease is also a course of suffering. Soldiers' camps are not free from disease. Indeed it has been ascertained that more soldiers die of disease than of bullet wounds.

For finance, they need not worry. Their faith will bring them all the pecuniary aid they may need. I know of no good cause that has died for want of funds.

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*5th February, 1925*

FROM VYKOM

The following from the Satyagraha Ashram at Vykom cannot fail to be of general interest.

"I hope you have got our telegram about the spinning competition. Two volunteers took 578 yds. and 508 yds. each, yarn being of 8 counts. Our weaving is not up to the mark now since some of the boys who knew weaving have left the Ashram on leave. We have, according to the directions of Vinobaji, reduced our number to barely fifty. But this has proved troublesome since the climate here is very bad and many of the resident volunteers become incapacitated to offer Satyagraha for six hours. So it has become necessary to go in for some ten to fifteen volunteers more, so that we have to keep a permanent strength of 60 volunteers. I hope you will agree that this is necessary.

"Of the 24 hrs. 8 hrs. for sleep, 6 hrs. for Satyagraha, 2 hrs. for spinning, 1 hr. for Hindi, 2 hrs. for Ashram work (sweeping, washing etc.), 2 hrs. for meals, bath, and other bodily wants, 1 hr. for reading room and 2 hrs. for daily prayer and meetings in which usually some good subjects are dealt with either by me or by some of the prominent guests who usually attend the Ashram.

"Our treasurer is now exerting himself for building a school in memory of the Satyagraha Campaign under orders from Sri Narayana Guru. All of us are anxiously waiting for



your coming here. It has become almost an obsession with most people here to consider what they should do to expedite your coming. I hope that God will grant you the health and time to proceed here shortly."

The scrupulous care with which things are being managed by the Vykom Satyagrahis is the surest assurance of success. It may seemingly take long, but it is my deliberate conviction that it is none the less the quickest way. It is the only true way. The fight against untouchability is a religious fight. It is a fight for the recognition of human dignity. It is a fight for a mighty reform in Hinduisim. It is a fight against the entrenched citadels of orthodoxy. Victory which is a certainty is worth the patience and the sacrifice, the band of devoted young Hindus is giving to it. The process of waiting is a process of self-purification for the young men engaged in the fight. If they persist they will be ranked among the makers of India of the future.

As for the Satyagrahis longing that I should go to Vykom I can only give them the assurance that I am longing to be with them. I am looking for a chance. But the choice becomes difficult when there are so many calls upon my time. My heart and my prayers are with them; who knows that they are not more than my bodily presence in their midst. M. K. G.

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*26th February, 1925*

### MORE ABOUT VYKOM

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following letter will be read with painful interest by those Hindus who look upon untouchability as a crime :

"We have seen your article in *Young India* about us. It is our fervent prayer that we do really deserve the high terms in which you have been kind enough to characterise our activities here. On reading it we have become to some extent depressed by

the sense of our own shortcomings and we are striving our utmost to come up to the level which will satisfy you when you come here and see things actually for yourself.

“In the meantime the local Legislative Council has thrown out “our resolution” by a majority of 22 to 21 votes. The Government majority was made up of 15 officials, 3 nominated members, one Brahmin representative of vested interests and three elected members. The constitution of the council is 15 official, 7 nominated non-officials and 28 elected non-officials. So of the 35 non-officials 21 voted for us, two stood neutral, 7 against us and the rest were absent. And of the 7 who voted against us, as already stated, three alone were elected from the general electorate.

“It is clear from the facts stated above that the Government, far from taking a neutral attitude, actually went the length of canvassing against the resolution. You may remember that, the Regent Maharani in her reply to the Caste Hindu jatha expressed a desire to know the attitude of the councils before doing anything in the matter. Then we had expected that the Government would at least have kept a neutral attitude. But now we find that it is not so. It has now become clear that the Government is to a large extent acting as the real opposition where enlightened opinion is in favour of reform.

“But what, however I wished to bring to your notice is this. The result of the resolution in the councils may prove the last straw on the camel's back. There are signs everywhere of an impatience at the gentle and ‘slow’ method of Satyagraha. Even responsible leaders may fall victims to the general restlessness. So if it is absolutely impossible for you to go over here in the near future, it must be at least possible for you to issue an authoritative statement regarding the implications of Satyagraha. Such a statement coming from you is bound to have the healthiest effect on minds that have begun to waver in the face of the present heavy odds. Some people have begun to advocate social ostracism of the high castes, non-co-operation and so

many other methods all of which are more or less dangerous in the present state of our society.

"Considerable strength of mind and perseverance is required now even to manage the Camp. But this is not the real difficulty. The matrix in which Satyagraha flourished is the general communal consciousness and I only point out that after ten months of Satyagraha when people realise, that the Travancore Council has thrown out the 'Freedom of Road' resolution, there is either a tendency to take to extreme steps or to completely collapse. Of these I am only afraid of the first and that is why I request that a message, clearly conveying to them all the implications of Satyagraha, how, though seemingly dilatory in its working, yet is the quickest agent for success, and how other methods are less useful is not positively harmful especially in a 'communal problem' etc., is highly necessary. I hope you will find time to do so."

That a State reported to be advanced should work in opposition to progressive opinion is a sad commentary on its 'advanced' state. The progressives really won the battle from a moral standpoint. Whilst it is regrettable that 22 should have voted against the use by the so-called untouchables of the public road in question it is consoling to find that twentyone members vindicated the position taken by the Hindu Reformers by voting in favour of their resolution. The saddest part of the letter, however, is the fact that the Satyagrahis seem to be losing hope. I do not wonder. Theirs is the first experience of sustained Satyagraha. Let me, however, assure them that victory is assured. For their cause is just, their means non-violent. Let them realise too that by their sufferings they have attracted the attention of the world. Whoever knew Vykam before the struggle commenced? They should also know that they are fighting an age-long superstition. What is a year's suffering on the part of a few reformers in their attempt to breakdown the iron wall of prejudice? To lose patience is to lose the battle. They must fight to the finish. What is the alternative any one can have in view? The breaking of heads will not serve the

purpose. Orthodoxy will stiffen its back and will suck nourishment out of the blood of its martyrs. For if the orthodox are injured, sympathy will irresistibly be drawn towards them though their cause is wrong. To attempt to force the entry will invite stronger barricades. And even if force succeeded, it would merely mean mechanical use of a single public road and not change of opinion.

What, however, the Hindu Reformers want is the conversion of the orthodox people who have made of untouchability a religion. This they will only do by sufferings such as they are now undergoing. Satyagraha is the shortest cut to success. All the reforms that have been brought about by violent methods have taken not one year but years. The victory of enlightenment over darkness in Europe has a long and torturing process. And one is not sure that it has a lasting success. There was no conversion of those who opposed and died. The others who were converted were attracted by the sufferings of those who died even whilst inflicting death on their opponents. The net legacy that age bequeathed the world was a confirmation of belief in methods of violence. I hope therefore that the Satyagrahis of Vykom will not swerve from their path even though their ranks may be thinned and victory may seem further off than ever. Satyagraha is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.

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*2nd April, 1925*

## VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

BY M. K. GANDHI

After the last lines on the Vykom affair were written for the last week's issue I received a wire from Mr. Pitt, Commissioner of Police, Travancore. It was then too late to publish in *Young India* the correspondence between the Commissioner of Police and myself. The reader must, however, have seen the correspondence in the Press. It makes a distinct advance in

the reform aimed at. The correspondence shows unmistakably that the Travancore Government favour the reform and that they are also pledged to carry it out at the earliest opportunity. Let no one consider that in agreeing to a referendum or interpretation I have endangered the reform itself. The present campaign in its inception is based on the assumption that the reform is required by the vast majority of the caste Hindus and that the prohibition against the suppressed classes is not warranted by the genuine Hindu scriptures. For me therefore not to have made the proposals would have betrayed woeful lack of resourcefulness. It was the most natural thing for a Satyagrahi like myself to have made the proposals which if they had proceeded from the orthodox party I could not have honestly rejected. Indeed I make bold to say that my proposals paved the way for the remarkable support the cause received every where, save among the very few members of the orthodox party. Had there been real opposition from the majority of caste Hindus or had there been any doubt as to the Shastric endorsement of the reform, the Satyagraha would have assumed a different shape altogether. It would have been then a movement for a change in the religion rather than the removal of an irreligious custom. Indeed those who were in immediate charge of the movement never questioned the propriety of my proposals. I could not take any step without consultation with them and without their full concurrence. It now remains for the Satyagrahis at Vykam to carry out the letter and the spirit of the agreement and for the caste Hindus to support the movement in the manner promised by them everywhere to ensure the speedy and successful ending of the struggle. The Satyagrahis must fulfil the letter by not overstepping the boundary line until a settlement is reached or a crossing after due notice by me becomes necessary for furthering the object of the agreement. The spirit of it requires gentleness and utmost humility on the part of the Satyagrahis. Their uniform courtesy towards the opponents of reform will break the edge of the opposition.

They must regard the Government not as opposed to the reform but as pledged to carry it out at the earliest possible moment. I have not the slightest reason to doubt the word of Her Highness the Maharani Regent or the Dewan or the Commissioner of Police. The conduct of satyagrahis in the Ashram must be in correspondence with their bearing at the boundary line. The Ashram must be a busy hive in which every member is ever found at his own allotted task. It must be a model of simplicity and sanitation. The members are pledged to the Charkha work during all spare moments. The spinning, the carding and the weaving departments admit of considerable improvement. Every inmate should be an expert carder and spinner if everyone cannot also become an expert weaver. The members must insist on spinning and weaving at least the cloth required by them. They should also learn Hindi well. They are or should regard themselves as trustees for the prestige and dignity of Hinduism. Theirs is a fight not to end with the opening of the roads round temples but it should be considered to be the beginning of a glorious struggle for the purity of Hinduism and removal of the abuses that have crept into it. They are not reformers who would take no note of the opposite side or would violate every sentiment of the orthodox people. They would vie with the tallest among the orthodox in purity of conduct and veneration for all that is good and noble in the Shastras. They would not disregard scriptural authority without the deepest thought and to that end some of them would even study Sanskrit and explore the possibilities of reform within the four corners of the scriptures. They will not be in a hurry, but having fearlessly taken all the steps that they can consistently with their creed of truth and non-violence, will have the patience and the faith of the *Rishis* of old.

### ENTRY INTO TEMPLES

For the opening of the roads is not the final but the first step in the ladder of reform. Temples in general, public wells, public schools must be open to the 'Untouchables' equally with

the caste Hindus. But that is not the present goal of the Satyagrahis. We may not force the pace. The schools are almost all open to the 'untouchables.' The temples and the public wells or tanks are not. Public opinion should be carefully cultivated and the majority should be converted before the reform can be successfully carried out. Meanwhile the remedy lies in founding temples and digging tanks or wells that would be open to the untouchables and to the other Hindus. I have no doubt that the movement for the removal of untouchability has made tremendous head way. Let us not retard it by indiscretion or over-zeal. Once the idea of pollution by the touch of a person by reason of his birth is gone the rest is easy and bound to follow.

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*4th June, 1925*

VYKOM

BY M. K. GANDHI

The public must not be allowed to forget the Vykom struggle. Let them understand that the Satyagrahis are at the present moment undergoing a higher form of discipline than they were before doing. Formerly they were plying their wheels in front of a physical obstacle to their further progress. It was barred by a barricade guarded by the police. Now, as the reader is aware, the barricade has been removed, the guard withdrawn and so is the notice of prohibition. The Satyagrahis are, therefore, voluntarily submitting to the self-imposed moral restraint, no doubt, in the clearly expressed hope that the *Savarna* Hindus directly concerned will relent and that the Government will themselves make an early declaration that the roads are open to the so called unapproachables as they are to every other human being and even to cats and dogs. The Hindu Government of Travancore owes the suppressed classes a double duty, the one that every humane government owes to suppressed humanity under its care, and the other, a Hindu government owes to Hinduism, that the State will lend no

countenance to an inhuman superstition that has crept into Hinduism.

So far for the State.

The *Savarna* Hindus of Travancore promised, and they owe it to themselves without the necessity of any promise to me, that they would not allow any rest to the Government till the roads in question were thrown open to the 'unapproachables'. They assured me that they would hold meetings throughout Travancore showing clearly to the Government that they regarded the prohibition as inconsistent with Hinduism and intolerable. Besides holding public meetings, they were to promote a monster petition signed by *Savarna* Hindus demanding the opening of the roads. I wonder if those gentlemen who gave me the assurance are keeping their promise?

And now for the 'unapproachables' miscalled. I understand that they are getting restive. They have a right to do so. I am further told that they are losing faith in Satyagraha. If so, their want of faith betrays ignorance of the working of Satyagraha. It is a force that works silently and apparently slowly. In reality, there is no force in the world that is so direct or so swift in working. But sometimes apparent success is more quickly attained by brute force. To earn ones living by body-labour is a method of earning it by Satyagraha. A gamble on the stock-exchange or house breaking, either of which is the reverse of Satyagraha, may apparently lead to an instantaneous acquisition of wealth. But the world has by now, I presume, realised that house-breaking and gambling are no methods of earning ones livelihood and that they do harm rather than good to the gambler or the thief. The 'unapproachables' may force their way by engaging in a free fight with the superstitious *Savarnas* but they will not have reformed Hinduism. Theirs will be a method of forcible conversion. But I am further told that some of them even threaten to seek shelter in Christianity, Islam or Buddhism if relief is not coming soon. Those who use the threat do not in my humble opinion, know the meaning of religion. Religion is a



matter of life and death. A man does not change religion as he changes his garments. He takes it with him beyond the grave. Nor does a man profess his religion to oblige others. He professes a religion because he cannot do otherwise. A faithful husband loves his wife as he would love no other woman. Even her faithlessness would not wean him from his faith. The bond is more than blood-relationship. So is the religious bond if it is worth anything. It is a matter of the heart. An untouchable who lives his Hinduism in the face of persecution at the hands of those Hindus who arrogate to themselves a superior status is a better Hindu than the self-styled superior Hindu, who by the very act of claiming superiority denies his Hinduism. Therefore, those who threaten to renounce Hinduism are in my opinion betraying their faith.

But the Satyagrahi's course is plain. He must stand unmoved in the midst of all these cross-currents. He may not be impatient with blind orthodoxy, nor be irritated over the unbelief of the suppressed people. He must know that his suffering will melt the stoniest heart of the stoniest fanatic and that it will also be a wall of protection for the wavering *Panchama* brother who has been held under suppression for ages. He must know that relief will come when there is the least hope for it. For such is the way of that cruelly-kind Deity who insists upon testing His devotees through a fiery furnace and delights in humbling him to the dust. In his hour of distress let the Satyagrahi recall to his mind the prayer of the fabled godly Elephant King who was saved only when he thought he was at his last gasp.

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24th September, 1925

### TRUE SATYAGRAHA

For a long time I have purposely refrained from writing anything in these columns about Vykom and its struggle against unapproachability. Nor do I want as yet to say any-

thing directly bearing on it. But I do want to tell the reader how the Satyagrahis at Vykom are passing their time.

A letter was received at Calcutta from Vykom dated the 1st of August. It has remained unpublished through oversight. But the substance of it is as fresh today as it was when it was received. I reproduce it below.

"Now there are only ten volunteers including myself. One of us daily does the kitchen-work while others except one offer Satyagraha for three hours each. Including the time taken to go and return the time for Satyagraha comes to four hours. We regularly get up at 4-30 a.m. and prayer takes half an hour. From 5 to 6 we have sweeping, drawing water and cleaning vessels. By seven all of us except two (who go for Satyagraha at 5-45 after bath) return after bath and spin or card till it is time for going to the barricade. Most of us regularly give 1,000 yards each per day and some of us even more. The average output is over 10,000 yards per day. I do not insist on our doing any work on Sundays when each do according to his will. Some of us card and spin for two or three hours on Sundays too. Anyhow no yarn is returned on Sundays. Those who are Congress members spin for the Congress franchise on Sundays. Some of us are now spinning on Sundays and other spare hours for our humble gift towards All India Deshabandhu Memorial Fund which you have instituted. We wish to pack a small bundle of yarn to you on the 4th September (G. O. M. Centenary Day). I hope you will be glad to receive it. This we spin apart from our routine work. We mean either to beg or to spin the whole of that auspicious day and to send whatever is obtained. We have not yet settled what we should do."

This shows that the Satyagrahis of Vykom have understood the spirit of their work. There is no bluster, there is no fireworks display : but there is here a simple determination to conquer by exact conduct. A Satyagrahi should be able to give a good account of every minute at his disposal. This the Vykom Satyagrahis are doing. The reader cannot fail to notice the honesty in spinning Congress yarn, and the yarn for the

G. O. M. Centenary during their off day. The idea too of spinning for the All-India Deshabandhu Memorial is in keeping with the rest of their doings. The letter before me gives me details of each member's spinning during the preceeding week omitting Sunday. The largest quantity spun by a single inmate is 6,895 yards of 17 counts. The lowest is 2,936 yards of 18 counts. The remark against his name is that he was absent on leave for three days. The average per man per day during that week was 866.6 yards. I have also before me the figures for the week ending 20th August. The highest during that week was 7,700 for a single individual, and the lowest was 2,000, the spinner having spun only two days during the week. The reader may ask what connection is there between the removal of untouchability and spinning. Apparently nothing. In reality much. It is not any single isolated act which can be called Satyagraha apart from the spirit behind. Here, there is the spirit behind the spinning which is bound to tell in the long run; for, spinning to these young men is a sacrificial national act calculated unconsciously to exhibit true humility, patience and pertinacity—qualities indispensable for clean success.

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*8th October, 1925*

FROM EUROPE

BY M. K. GANDHI

When I think of my littleness and my limitations on the one hand and of the expectations raised about me on the other, I become dazed for the moment but I come to myself as soon as I realise that these expectations are a tribute not to me, a curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde, but to the incarnation, however imperfect but comparatively great in me, of the two priceless qualities of truth and non-violence. I must therefore not shirk the responsibility of giving what aid I can to fellow-seekers after Truth from the West.

I have already dealt with a letter from America. I have

before me one from Germany. It is a closely reasoned letter. It has remained with me for nearly a month. At first I thought I would send a private reply and let it be published in Germany, if the correspondent desired it. But having re-read the letter I have come to the conclusion that I should deal with it in these columns. I give the letter below in full :

“Not only India but also the rest of the earth has heard your message of Satyagraha and Swadeshi. A great number of young people in Europe believe in your creed. They see in it a new attitude to political things put into action, of which till now they had only dreamed.

“But also among the young people who are convinced of the truth of your message are many who dissent from some details of your demands on men which seem wrong to them. In their name is this letter written.

“In answer to a question you declared on the 21st of March 1921 that Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence. On the other hand it is known that you recommended the punishment of General Dyer by the English Government, which shows that you see the necessity for law guaranteed through violence. From this I can but conclude that you do not object to capital punishment and so do not condemn killing in general. You value life so low that you allow thousands of Indians to lose theirs for Satyagraha and doubtless you know that the least interference with the life of men, imprisonment, is mainly based on the same principle as the strongest, killing, for in each case men are caused by an outside force to diverge from their *Dharma*. A man who thinks logically knows that it is the same principle that causes his imprisonment for a few days or his execution and that the difference is only in the size not in the kind of interference. He knows, too, that a man who stands for punishment in general must not shrink from killing.

“You see in Non-co-operation not an ideal only but also a safe and quick way to freedom for India, a way possible only

there where a whole population has to revolt against a government that has the force of arms. But when a whole State wants to get its rights from another state, then the principle of Non-co-operation is powerless, for this other one may get a number of other States to form an alliance with it even when some of the other States remain neutral. Not until a real League of Nations exists, to which every state belongs, can Non-co-operation become a real power, since no State can afford to be isolated from all the others. That is why we fight for the League of Nations but that is also the reason why we try to retain a strong police force, lest internal revolts and disorder should make all foreign policy impossible. That is why we understand that other governments are doing what they forbade us to do, arming themselves in case of an attack by their enemies. They are, for the time being, obliged to do so, and we really ought to do the same if we don't want to be continually violated. We hope that you will see our point. If you do, we should be very much obliged to you if you would say so in answer to this letter, for it is necessary that the youth of Europe learns your true attitude to these questions. But please do not think that we want you to forswear something that is one of the main points of your creed, Satyagraha.

"But we see Satyagraha not in an absolute non-violence which never nowhere has been really carried out, even by you, or even by Christ himself who drove the usurers out of the temple. With us, Satyagraha is the unreserved disposition to brotherhood and sacrifice which you are showing us so splendidly with the Indian people and we hope to be growing into the same state of mind, since it has been understood that a system may be wicked but never a whole class or a whole people (you wrote about this on the 13th of July, 1921) and that one ought to feel pity but not hatred for the blind defenders of wickedness. Men who come to understand this are taking their first steps on the new way to brotherhood between all men and this way will lead to the goal, to the victory of truth, to Satyagraha.

"We ask you, in your answer not only to advise us to fight

for our country in the way we think right, but we would very much like to know, what you think to be right, especially how you justify an entire non-violence which we see as a resignation to all real fighting against wickedness and for this reason wicked in itself,—as we would call a policemen wicked who let a criminal escape unpunished.

“Our conviction is, that we ought to follow our own *Dharma* first and before all that we ought to live the life designed for us by God, but that the right and the duty is given to us to interfere with the life of our fellowmen when they ask us to do so or when we see in such interference a way to fight a threatening evil for all the world. We believe that otherwise one is not right in interfering, for only God can see through the soul of men and judge what is the right way for men and we believe that there is no greater sacrilege to be found than to assume the place of God—which sacrilege we believe the English people to be guilty of, as they think to have the mission to interfere with people all over the world.

“For this reason we don’t understand how you can recommend to married people to deny themselves to each other without mutual agreement, for such an interference with the rights given by marriage can drive a man to crimes. You ought to advise divorce in those cases.

“Please answer these, our questions. We are so glad to have the model given by you that we want very much to be quite clear about the right way to live up to your standard.”

In my travels I have not the file of *Young India* before me, but there is no difficulty about my endorsing the statement that ‘Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence.’ Both these statements relate to an ideal state and therefore are made with reference to those men and women who have so far purified themselves as to have no malice, no anger, no violence in them. That does not mean that the woman in the imagined case would quietly allow herself to be violated. In the first instance such a woman would stand in no danger of

violence and in the second if she did, without doing violence to the ruffian she would be able completely to defend her honour.

But I must not enter into details. Even women who can defend themselves with violence are not many. Happily, however, cases of indecent assaults are not also very many. Be that as it may, I believe implicitly in the proposition that perfect purity is its own defence. The veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity.

The writer is not correctly informed about my attitude in regard to General Dyer. He would be pleased to know that not only did I not recommend any punishment of General Dyer but even my colleagues, largely out of their generous regard for me, waived the demand for punishment. What, however, I did ask for, and I do press for even now, is the stopping of the pension to General Dyer. It is no part of the plan of non-violence to pay the wrong-doer for the wrong he does which practically would be the case if I became a willing party to the continuation of the pension to General Dyer. But let me not be misunderstood. I am quite capable of recommending even punishment to wrong-doers under conceivable circumstances; for instance, I would not hesitate under the present state of society to confine thieves and robbers, which is in itself a kind of punishment. But I would also admit that it is not Satyagraha and that it is a fall from the pure doctrine. That would be not an admission of weakness of the doctrine but weakness of myself. I have no other remedy to suggest in such cases in the present state of society. I am, therefore, satisfied with advocating the use of prisons more as reformatories than as places of punishment.

But I would draw the distinction between killing and detention or even corporal punishment. I think that there is a difference not merely in quantity but also in quality. I can recall the punishment of detention. I can make reparation to the man upon whom I inflict corporal punishment. But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation. God alone can take life, because He alone gives it.

I hope there is no confusion in the writer's mind when he

couples the self-immolation of a Satyagrahi with the punishment imposed from without. But in order to avoid even a possibility of it let me make it clear that the doctrine of violence has reference only to the doing of injury by one to another. Suffering injury in one's own person is on the contrary of the essence of non-violence and is the chosen substitute for violence to others. It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for Satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life and what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice. I think that the writer is correct in saying that non-co-operation is not merely an ideal but also 'a safe and quick way to freedom for India.' I do suggest that the doctrine holds good also as between States and States. I know that I am treading on delicate ground if I refer to the late War. But I fear that I must in order to make the position clear. It was a war of aggrandizement, as I have understood, on either part. It was a war for dividing the spoils of the exploitation of weaker races,—otherwise euphemistically called the world commerce. If Germany today changed her policy and made a determination to use her freedom not for dividing the commerce of the world but for protecting through her moral superiority the weaker races of the earth, she could certainly do that without armament. It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences as it must some day, unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself. I may not push this delicate subject any further. I know that I am writing in a theoretical way upon a practical question without knowing all its bearings. My only excuse is, if I understand it correctly, that that is what the writer has wanted me to do.



I do justify entire Non-violence and consider it possible in relation between man and man and nations and nations, but it is not 'a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness.' On the contrary the Non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than relation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and therefore a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are true as Euclid's definitions which are none the less true because in practice we are unable even to draw Euclid's line on a black board. But even a geometrician finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions. Nor may we, the German friend, his colleagues and myself, dispense with the fundamental propositions on which the doctrine of Satyagraha is based.

There remains for me now only one ticklish question to answer. In a most ingenious manner the writer has compared the English arrogation of the right of becoming tutors to the whole world to my views on relations between married people. But the comparison does not hold good. The marriage bond involves seeing each other only as mutual agreement. But surely abstention requires no consent. Married life would be intolerable, as it does become, when one partner breaks through all bonds of restraint. Marriage confirms the right of union between two partners to the exclusion of all the others when in their joint opinion they consider such union to be desirable but it confers no right upon one partner to demand obedience of the other to one's wish for union. What should be done when one partner on moral or other grounds cannot

conform to the wishes of the other is a separate question. Personally, if divorce was the only alternative I should not hesitate to accept it, rather than interrupt my moral progress,—assuming that I want to restrain myself on purely moral grounds.

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22nd October, 1925

### WHEN CRIME NOT IMMORAL

A fair friend sends me 'Crisp sayings' by Dan Griffiths on crime and wants me to find room for them in these pages. Here are some extracts which a Satyagrahi can readily subscribe to:—

"State law is not necessarily moral. Crime is not necessarily immoral."

"There is a world of difference between illegality and immorality."

"Not all illegalities are immoral and not all immoralities are illegal."

Who can say that whilst not to crawl on one's belly at the dictation of an officer might be an illegality it is also an immorality? Rather is it not true that refusal to crawl on one's belly may be illegal but it would be in the highest degree moral? Another illuminating passage is the following: "Modern society is in itself a crime factory. The militarist is a relative of the murderer and the burglar is the complement of the stock jobber." The third excerpt runs as follows:—

"The thief in law is merely a person who satisfies his acquisitive instincts in ways not sanctioned by the community. The real thief is the person who takes more out of society than he puts into it." But "Society punishes those who *annoy* it, not those who *injure* it,—the *retail* and not the *wholesale* offenders."

M. K. G.

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*11th January, 1926*

## VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

Hindu reformers who are intent on removal of untouchability should understand the implications of Vykomb Satyagraha and its results. The immediate goal of the Satyagrahis was the opening of the roads surrounding the temple, not their entry into the latter. Their contention was that the roads should be opened to the so-called untouchables as they were to all other Hindus and even non-Hindus. That point has been completely gained. But whilst Satyagraha was directed to the opening of roads, the ultimate aim of reformers is undoubtedly removal of every disability that 'the untouchables' are labouring under and which the other Hindus are not. It therefore includes access to temples, wells, schools etc. to which other non-Brahmins are freely admitted. But for achieving these reforms much remains to be done before the methods of direct action can be adopted. Satyagraha is never adopted abruptly and never till all other and milder methods have been tried. The reformers of the South have to cultivate public opinion in the matter of temple-entry etc. This is moreover a disability not peculiar to the South but unfortunately and, to our shame it must be admitted, common, to more or less extent, to Hinduism throughout India. I therefore welcome the decision of Sjt. Kellappan Nayar who was in charge of the camp at Vykomb to concentrate his effort on working among the unhappiest and the most suppressed among 'the untouchables' *i. e.* Puliyas whose very shadow defiles. It is a golden rule to follow out every direct action with constructive work *i. e.* work of conservation. Reform has to be undertaken at both ends to make *savarnas* do their duty by the untouchables whom they have so cruelly suppressed and help the latter to become more presentable and to shed habits for which they can in no way be held accountable but which nevertheless have to be given up if they are to occupy their proper place in the social scale.

M. K. G.

*6th May, 1926*

## FROM FAR-OFF AMERICA

BY M. K. GANDHI

Some time ago I answered some questions put by a correspondent in America. He now returns to the charge and puts several further questions, the first being :

“What good is that brave and fearless mentality when it cannot save the things you love? You may not be afraid to die, but what it is that will keep a band of robbers from taking away from you what you cherish if you are going to remain non-violent to the end. If the victims of a robber do not offer violent resistance it is so much easier for the robber to loot them. Robbery has been going on and it will go on in the world till the victims are easy. The strong will rob the weak, resistance or no resistance. To be weak is a sin. Not to prepare by all means to get rid of this weakness is a crime.”

The writer forgets that retaliation does not always succeed. The robber is likely, if stronger, to defeat the protector and vent his wrath, kindled by the resistance received, on the unfortunate victim whose plight would therefore be the worse for the resistance offered on her behalf. It is true that the protector will have the satisfaction of having done his best for his charge. But the same satisfaction will be available to the non-violent protector. For, he too will die in the attempt to rescue the victim. What is more, he will have the additional satisfaction of having tried to soften the heart of the robber by his pleading. The writer's difficulty arises from the fact of his having assumed that the non-violent protector is to be a mere passive helpless spectator of the robbery. As a matter of fact, however, in my scheme, love is presumed to be a more active and potent force than brute force. He who has not the love and remains passive is a coward. He is neither man nor brute. He has proved himself unfit to protect.

The writer obviously cannot realise, as I have done, the tremendous power that non-violent resistance has over one's adversary. Non-violent resistance is the resistance of one will against another. That resistance is possible only when it is freed from reliance on brute force. Reliance on brute force as a rule presupposes surrender when that force is exhausted. Does the writer know that a woman with a determined will can successfully resist her ravisher however powerful he may be?

I admit that the strong will rob the weak and that it is sin to be weak. But this is said of the soul in man, not of the body. If it be said of the body, we could never be free from the sin of weakness. But the strength of soul can defy a whole world in arms against it. This strength is open to the weakest in body. A weak-willed Zulu, though strong as a giant in body, surrenders to a little white child. Who has not seen strong-bodied bullies surrendering helplessly to their frail mothers? Love conquers the brute in the son. The law that subsists between mother and son is universal in its application. Nor need love be reciprocal. It is its own reward. Many a mother has tamed by her love her erring defiant children. Let us all prepare to get rid of the weakness of love. There is chance of success there. For rivalry in loving is conducive to health. The world has been trying all these ages to become strong in the wielding of brute force and it has miserably failed. Rivalry in generating brute force is race suicide.

The writer adds :

"The British rulers seem to have as much soul force as you have, but they have military force and practical knowledge of human nature besides. The result is obvious."

Military force is inconsistent with soul-force. Frightfulness, exploitation of the weak, immoral gains, insatiable pursuit after enjoyments of the flesh are utterly inconsistent with soul-force. The soul force that the British rulers have is therefore subservient to the brute force if it is not asleep altogether.

The writer then puts the eternal conundrum :

“ There are certain greedy persons in the world and they are doing mischief. They have power in their hands. They may be mad, but they are doing harm nevertheless. It will not do for us to stand by with folded hands and let them go on with their devilish work. We must take the power away from them even at the cost of non-violence, so that they may not do any more harm.”

History teaches one that those who have, no doubt with honest motives, ousted the greedy by using brute force against them, have in their turn become a prey to the disease of the conquered. If it be better to be slaves than slave-drivers, if this is no mere copy-book maxim, we can easily afford to let the slave-drivers do their worst, whilst, being weary of the brutal tug of war, so unbefitting our human nature, we try to explore the possibilities of matching the brute force of the greedy exploiters and the like with soul force.

But the writer is met with this difficulty at the threshold of the experiment :

“ Mahatmaji, you admit that the people of India have not followed your creed. You do not seem to realise the cause of it. The truth is that the average person is not a Mahatma. History proves this fact beyond doubt. There have been a few Mahatmas in India and elsewhere. These are exceptions. And the only exceptions prove the rule. You must not base your actions on the exceptions.”

It is curious how we delude ourselves. We fancy that one can make the perishable body impregnable and we think it impossible to evoke the hidden powers of the soul. Well I am engaged in trying to show, if I have any of these powers, that I am as frail a mortal as any of us and that I never had any thing extraordinary about me nor have any now. I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough in me to confess my errors and to retrace my steps. I own that I have an immovable faith in God and His goodness and unconsumable

passion for truth and love. But is that not what every person has latent in him? If we are to make progress, we must not repeat history but make new history. We must add to the inheritance left by our ancestors. If we may make new discoveries and inventions in the phenomenal world, must we declare our bankruptcy in the spiritual domain? Is it impossible to multiply the exceptions so as to make them the rule? Must man always be brute first and man after, if at all?

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*10th April, 1924*

### WHAT IT IS NOT

BY M. K. GANDHI

The situation in India illustrates another curious basis of difference between us. I hold to the "non-resistance" idea. Gandhi, as I understand him, proclaims the Way of Love. And yet he does not see that "Non-co-operation is a way of violence." Suppose the milk drivers of New York had a real and just and even terrible grievance. Suppose that they should strike and cut off the milk supply from the babies of New York. They might never raise a hand in violent attack on any one and yet their way would be the way of violence. Over the dead bodies of little children they would by "non-co-operation" win their victory. As Bertrand Russell said of the Bolshevik, "such suffering makes us question the means used to arrive at a desired end." Non-co-operation means suffering in Lancashire and is an appeal in the end to violence rather than reason.

This is not quite to the point and yet it does illustrate in a way what I have in mind. The advocates of Home Rule in India are now in the legislative bodies and there they propose to block progress by non-co-operative methods. In England, the country in which by historical accident civil institutions got a chance to develop, as John Fiske

pointed out, through absence of war, the process of growth has been by the method of co-operation.

The above is an extract from an article in *Unity* (14th February, 1924) sent by an unknown American friend.

The article is a letter addressed to Mr. Holmes by Mr. Arthur L. Weatherly. The letter is an endeavour to show that an idealist, if he will be practical, has to water his ideal down to suit given circumstances. The writer has packed his letter with illustrations in support of his argument. As I am not for the moment concerned with his main argument, I hope I am doing no violence to him by merely giving an extract from his letter. My purpose is to show that Mr. Weatherly's view of Indian non-co-operation cannot fail to be of general interest to the reader.

Mr. Weatherly has laid down a universal proposition that 'non-co-operation is a way of violence.' A moment's thought would have shown the falsity of the proposition. I non-co-operate when I refuse to sell liquor in a liquor-shop, or help a murderer in his plans. My non-co-operation, I hold, is not only not a way of violence, but may be an act of love, if love is the motive that has prompted my refusal. The fact is that all non-co-operation is not violent, and non-violent non-co-operation can never be an act of violence. It may not be always an act of love. For love is an active quality which cannot always be inferred from the act itself. A surgeon may perform a most successful operation and yet he may have no love for his patient.

Mr. Weatherly's illustration is most unhappy and incomplete for the purpose of examination. If the milk drivers of New York have a grievance against its Municipality for criminal mismanagement of its trust and if, in order to bend it, they decided to cut off the milk supply of the babies of New York, they would be guilty of a crime against humanity. But suppose that the milk drivers were underpaid by their employers, that they were consequently starving, they would be justified if they have tried every other available and proper method of securing better wages, in refusing to drive the milk carts even though



their action resulted in the death of the babies of New York. Their refusal will certainly not be an act of violence though it will not be an act of love. They were not philanthropists. They were driving milk carts for the sake of their maintenance. It was no part of their duty as employees under every circumstance to supply milk to babies. There is no violence when there is no infraction of duty. Suppose further that the milk drivers in question knew that their employers supplied cheap but adulterated milk and another dairy company supplied better but dearer milk and they felt for the welfare of the babies of New York, their refusal to drive the milk carts will be an act of love even though some short-sighted mother of New York might be deprived of the adulterated milk and may not have bought better but dearer milk from the more honest dairy company whose existence has been assumed for the purpose of our argument.

From the imaginary heartless milk drivers and the heaps of dead bodies of New York babies, the writer in *Unity* takes us to Lancashire and pictures its ruin when Indian non-co-operation has succeeded. In his haste to prove his main argument, the writer has hardly taken the trouble to study even simple facts. Indian non-co-operation is not designed to injure Lancashire or any other part of the British Isles. It has been undertaken to vindicate India's right to administer her own affairs. Lancashire's trade with India was established at the point of the bayonet and it is sustained by similar means. It has ruined the one vital cottage-industry which supplemented the resources of millions of India's peasants and kept starvation from their doors. If India now strives to revive her cottage industry and hand-spinning and refuses to buy any foreign cloth or even cloth manufactured by Indian mills and Lancashire or Indian mills suffer thereby, non-co-operation cannot by any law of morals be held to be an act of violence. India never bound herself to maintain Lancashire. Visitors to taverns or houses of ill fame would be congratulated on their self-restraint, and will be held even as benefactors of keepers of taverns or questionable houses, if they

ceased to visit those places even without notice and even if their abstention resulted in the starvation of the keepers of those houses. Similarly if customers of money-lenders ceased to borrow and the latter starved, the former cannot be regarded as violent by reason of their withdrawal. But they might be so considered if they transferred their custom from one money-lender to another through ill-will or spite and without just cause.

Thus it is clear that non-co-operation is not violence when the refusal of the restraint is a right and a duty even though by reason of its performance some people may have to suffer. It will be an act of love when non-co-operation is resorted to solely for the good of the wrong-doer. Indian non-co-operation is a right and a duty but cannot be regarded as an act of love because it has been undertaken by a weak people in self-defence.

Mr. Weatherly's reference to the obstructive programme of the Swarajists cannot for reasons stated last week be examined for the time being.

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*24th April, 1924*

## MR. PENNINGTON ON THE WAR-PATH

BY M. K. GANDHI

Mr. Pennington sent the following letter to my predecessor from France :

As a very old official of the Indian Government, I read *Young India* very carefully to see how you propose to govern the country when you have succeeded in making British Rule impossible. You will perhaps admit that we British think we have a duty to perform in India, by way of keeping the peace both internally and externally, and that we should not be justified in handing it over, except to something like a possible Government. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Gandhi and many other "Swarajists," but do you honestly think that any Government he could form could govern that enormous country without a backing of British bayonets ?

If the Swarajists could have shown that they could manage affairs even tolerably under Mr. Montague's scheme for the short period of 10 years, it might have been possible to frame some sort of Colonial scheme that would work ; but, so far, they have only shown how to make anything like representative Government quite impossible, and so proved the greater fitness of the old system in the present state of the country. It may be necessary therefore to try some other plan perhaps by further Indianization of the old system, as suggested many years ago by Mr. Donald Smeaton. The King's Government must be carried on even if Diarchy has to be scrapped."

I am glad to be able to renew acquaintance with Mr. J. B. Pennington. The answer to his query is incredibly simple. If India succeeds in making British *Rule* impossible without matching the British bayonet with another bayonet, she will rule herself too with the same means. But if it is an unalterable law that the rule of one bayonet can only be displaced by another of equal or greater strength, then I see no present prospect of making British Rule impossible. I must admit as my correspondent will have me to, that British people think that they have a duty to perform in India, but I may be permitted to add that we Indians think that their duty is not to *impose* peace upon us when we are longing to war against one another, but to lift their oppressive weight from over our heads. We think that we are sinking beneath that weight.

M. K. G.

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1st May, 1924

### WHAT IS VIOLENCE ?

BY M. K. GANDHI

*A propos* of my article in *Young India* (April 10, 1924) entitled, 'What It is not' a correspondent examining the ingredients of violence says :

"The real issue is not about just or unjust grounds. Whether an act is an act of violence or not can be determin-

ed, not by reference to the grounds on which it is undertaken, but by reference to the manner in which it affects the party against whom it is directed and the effects which it produces generally. Both—acts of violence and acts that are not acts of violence—may have a just or an unjust cause. If a just cause can vindicate the adoption of a remedy why should it justify a passive remedy only and not an active remedy? If it can vindicate N. C. O. it can equally justify the use of a sword. What moral delicacy should induce us to adopt N. C. O. and discard the sword? We are answered that the use of the sword is a way of violence. Why is that so? The reason is clear that it causes pain and suffering to our adversary. Does not N. C. O. do the same? Is there any difference between the two? The only difference is this. Whilst a thrust from the sword would cause a feeling of pain and suffering due to a disturbance caused thereby to the natural processes *inside the body*, which result in and preserve life, the practising of N. C. O. would cause pain and suffering by a disturbance to the processes working *outside the body* in the economic, social and political spheres—processes which are as much responsible for the preservation of life as those working inside the body.”

The argument is clever but it does not take us very far. The writer confuses two words, pain and violence, and regards them as synonymous. A physician who administers a bitter drug or cuts open an artery causes pain but does no violence. The patient thanks him for it. If I do not serve my employer because he ill-treats me, my resignation i. e. non-co-operation may cause pain but I have used no violence. But if I hammer him so as to make him do justice I have extorted justice by violence.

#### HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION IN SINDH

Dr. Choithram has sent me newspaper cuttings which give a fair idea of the trouble that seems to be brewing in Sindh. I have no desire to go into the facts of the case. There was an attempt to settle the Hindu-Muslim dispute by arbitration.

Dr. Choithram and Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon have had their say in the Press. Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon says that there could be no arbitration before change of hearts. Whatever the cause, the failure of arbitration is unfortunate. But the painful part of the whole affair is that the Hindus do not feel that they are safe and that the Police guard the route in the affected area. If this is true, there is something radically wrong. Whoever is to blame, there should be an understanding between the parties that no one can take the law into his own hands. The parties may go to court if they cannot arbitrate, but overawing of one party by another can only end in bloodshed eventually. That is hardly the way of religion.

I assure my Hindu and Mussalman friends that I am feverishly anxious to disburden my soul of my views on Hindu-Mulsim unity. I am simply waiting for friends who have asked me not to say anything till they and I have discussed the question. The accounts I receive daily of the tension show that the greatest question before the country is that of Hindu-Muslim unity and no other. I hope that a way will be found out of the present most unsatisfactory state of things. M. K. G.

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*15th May, 1924*

### LETTER FROM LALAJI

Lala Lajpatrai says in the course of a letter written during the voyage :

The symbol of non-violence that I was wearing at the time of embarkation met with violence the very first day of my voyage. There are about a score of Indians on board this ship. Only two of us had the Gandhi caps on at the time of going aboard. All eyes were on us and one could see signs of anger on some faces. At dinner time I left my cap on the hat-rack outside. After dinner I searched for it in

vain. It had disappeared. It was not worth stealing. So the only conclusion one could come to was that it was stored into the sea. I am not sorry for it as the act must have given satisfaction to the doer. But I was determined to keep on. Yesterday again I left my cap (another) outside the dining saloon at the same place. This time it was not touched and so the episode is over.

I am already feeling better. The sea-breeze and the rest is doing me good. I wish you also could tear yourself from your responsibilities and take a complete rest outside India.

It is evident the khaddar cap has still many a stiff battle in front of it.

M. K. G.

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*5th June, 1924*

### PUNISHMENT OR REWARD?

Thoreau has said that under a despotic government plenty is a crime and poverty a merit. In other words the frowns of such a government are any day welcome. One has to be cautious about its smiles. Taken in this light the punishment of the "Swarajya" of Madras may be treated as a reward for public services rendered. I can therefore only congratulate Mr. Prakasam upon his paper being the first to be on the black list of the Madras Government. That the Indian members of that Government are responsible for this reward does not surprise me. They could do no better. They must either sustain that Government or resign. They believe in that Government being for the good of the country. Non-violent non-co-operation is intended to quicken the process of disillusionment. That process has been slow because we have believed only somewhat in non-co-operation and still less in non-violence.

M. K. G.

*12th June, 1924*

## THE WRONG WAY

But let us not lose patience because we fancy we are helpless. The Serajganj conference has given us the wrong lead. I have not got before me the text of its resolution regarding Gopinath Saha. It reads, I am sorry to say, much worse than the wording shown by the 'Times of India' reporter. Here is the text. I copy from the 'Forward' (4th June). 'While adhering to the policy of non-violence this conference pays its respectful homage to patriotism of Gopinath Saha who suffered capital punishment in connection with Mr. Dey's murder.' I cannot but regard the resolution as a travesty of non-violence. It would have been less undignified, if non-violence had not been dragged in at all. The patriotism of Gopinath Saha could only consist in the murder and not in the capital punishment which was the consequence of the murder. He was not out to die but to murder one who was odious to him. The knowledge that he ran the risk of being hanged made him brave but not necessarily patriotic. For every murderer knows that he runs such risk and may therefore be called brave. The patriotism if any therefore consisted in the act of murder. Now murder is inconsistent with non-violence even when regarded purely as a policy. Non-violent suffering in one's person and violent injury to another cannot both be patriotic at the same time. The patriotism of every lover of his country demands that whilst the country pursues a policy of non-violence, he does not disturb it by committing murder. And if anybody does, those who are pledged to the policy of non-violence are in duty bound not only to dissociate themselves from such acts but to condemn them in unmeasured terms, if only because they must by thus cultivating public opinion against them, discourage such murder. And this condemnation is necessary even though the motive is the purest imaginable. In practical politics, actions count and not mere motives or 'mental attitudes' bereft of acts or results. Had the

belief in the policy of non-violence not been reiterated, much of my argument would no doubt lose its force. But I do submit that so long as the Congress creed stands as it is, every congressman to be true to his creed is pledged to oppose and condemn in thought, word and deed every act of political violence. I would therefore humbly advise the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to dissociate itself entirely from the resolution of the conference or explain its position to the public if there is any explanation for the resolution which appears to have been carried with an overwhelming majority. M. K. G.

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*12th June, 1924*

### AM TIRED OF MAHATMA

The scene in Serajganj Conference over attaching 'Mahatma' to my name has caused deep pain to me. Those who out of their infatuation for the application of the title 'Mahatma' to me either howled down the gentleman who would not use the name or who implored him to do so, rendered no service to the cause or to me. They harmed the cause of non-violence and pained me. What relish could they have in a person using a title from compulsion? I congratulate the gentleman upon his courage in having withdrawn from the Conference rather than use a title under compulsion. He showed, in my opinion, a truer appreciation of what I stand for than my blind admirers. I assure all admirers and friends that they will please me better if they will forget the Mahatma and remember Gandhiji as the gentleman in question quite courteously did or think of me simply as Gandhi. The highest honour that my friends can do me is to enforce in their own lives the programme that I stand for or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it. Blind adoration, in the age of action, is perfectly valueless, is often embarrassing and equally often painful. M. K. G.

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*19th June, 1924*

### MEANING OF 'UNTRUTHFUL'

A Swarajist friend writing from Simla about the use of the adjectives 'violent' and 'untruthful' in my recent writings says, "You mean those who are 'untrue' to the triple boycott. May I suggest most respectfully to explain that observation, by the way, in one of your 'notes'? As it has pained some prominent friends here, so must it have pained others elsewhere. I have understood it in the light in which I have interpreted it above. But I believe, especially when you will be the last man in the world to be misunderstood, a reference in one of your notes will not be futile."

Had not the friend kindly drawn my attention to the misunderstanding, I should never have known its existence. The whole of my recent writings have been directed to the untruthful atmosphere that surrounds us. My criticism is all-inclusive. I know no-changers who do not enforce in their own persons the Khaddar resolution. Their action is in my opinion decidedly untruthful. When we do not believe in the boycott of law-courts and still pretend as if we did, our attitude is untruthful. Many of us do not believe in non-violence in thought, word, and deed and still profess to subscribe to the policy of non-violence. We are untruthful whether we are pro-changers or no-changers.

M. K. G.

*19th June, 1924*

### VALUE OF SILENT WORK

Barodada (Dwijendranath Tagore) sends the following helpful note:—

"The following has come to my mind like a flash of lightning.

How great a value a simple good work has when done silently before the All-seeing eye of God seems to me to be unknown to the generality of men of our present generation.

Most people, who are worthy in other respects, place an undue value on the high-sounding names of things and persons, disregarding altogether their real import. Are the Rishis of Ancient India less Rishis because their names are unknown to the superficial histories of modern times? When will the eyes of our understanding be opened to this simple and soul-satisfying truth that mere names are words echoed from mouth to mouth signifying nothing? How many people pay homage to the name of Shakespeare without ever having opened a single book of Shakespeare? How many people bow to the name of Christ with the appearance of sincere reverence, whose daily life throws to the dogs every word of Christ spoken in love to all humanity irrespective of caste and creed? I am perfectly sure that each good work, however insignificant in appearance, will bear tenfold fruit in comparison to the grandiloquent and pompous works performed mostly with a view to acquire *names* in history. It is obvious that if we want to gain success in this great movement which Providence has placed in our hands without our asking, we must concentrate all our efforts on the real work we have to do and totally cut of all connection with those names of things and persons which exert undue influence over our untutored minds and which 'hover through the midnight air' of our ignorance (of *avidya*) like the witches of Macbeth. The name non-co-operation may shock the prejudiced ear of a student of the abstract ethics of the schools, while the *thing* non-co-operation is the best medicine for the cure of our mad endeavour after the attainment of all the nourishment that bread can give from the stones thrown at us in mockery by the well-fed and well-clothed house-holder at whose door we stand begging, in our present half-starved and ragged condition, to be allowed the privileges of co-operating with him, on equal terms, with regard to the right distribution of food and clothing amongst us for our mutual benefit."

I wish every worker will treasure the beautiful thought contained in Barodada's note and believe with him that all true work will abide when names will have been forgotten. M.K.G.

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26th June, 1924

### NEWS TO ME

A correspondent says that I am reported to have said that 'it is better that one cow be sacrificed rather than seven goats.' He then asks me to disown or endorse the statement and in the latter case to justify it. I do not recollect having made any such statement as the correspondent refers to. And whoever has heard me make such a statement will oblige me by reminding me of the occasion. According to my correspondent I am supposed to have made the statement as editor of *Young India*. If so, there should be no difficulty about confronting me with it. But what I am likely to have said or written is that if I could non-violently persuade people, I would have them to save the goat just as well as I would have people to save the cow. As I have said before in these pages, for me the cow is the purest type of sub-human life. She pleads before us on behalf of the whole of sub-human species for justice to it at the hands of man, the first among all that lives. She seems to speak to us through her eyes (let the reader look at them with my faith), 'you are not appointed over us to kill us and eat our flesh or otherwise ill-treat us, but to be our friend and guardian.'

M. K. G.

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### WELL DONE, DELHI

So Delhi has taken the lead in forming an arbitration board in the matter of Hindu-Muslim tension. Only two years ago one felt absolutely secure of Hindu-Muslim unity in Delhi where Hakim Saheb was the uncrowned king and where Swami Shradhdhanandji was privileged to address Mussalmans in the Jumma Musjid. Surely it should not be beyond the joint ability

of Hindus and Mussalmans to establish a lasting peace in Delhi. If a central place like Delhi can secure such peace, the other places will I have no doubt follow suit. I have not the heart to reproduce for the edification of the reader all the pestilential literature that I have received from Delhi each party painting the other in the most lurid colours. The reader may be assured however that all that I have adumbrated in my statement is to be found in that literature. It would be a great blessing if the parties concerned will but bring their charges to the notice of the board and get from it an authoritative pronouncement.

M. K. G.

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*23rd October, 1924*

## THE LAW OF LOVE

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend tells me that whilst I am wooing the Swarajists, the Liberals and others, I seem to be forsaking the No-changers and that they are bewildered at the change I am undergoing. The friend asks me to state my position from the No-changers' stand-point and to explain the seeming transformation in my attitude. He says I must clearly define the benign aspect of non-co-operation or Satyagraha that I adumbrated at the Excelsior Theatre meeting in Bombay.

In the first instance, I would clear the ground by saying that my own views remain unchanged. I swear by non-violent non-co-operation and all the boycotts that follow from it. But I see as clearly as day-light (this I did not see at Juhu) that the country as a whole has not understood non-violence and therefore has not understood the non-co-operation that was presented to it. I therefore see equally clearly that the keeping up of non-co-operation without its active principle, non-violence, must do harm to the country. It has done much harm already, in that it has divided the country into opposing parties. In such circumstances, non-co-operation as a national programme

must for the time being be suspended. The root of non-co-operation is in Satyagraha, which is love. The law of love,—call it attraction, affinity, cohesion, if you like,—governs the world. Life persists in the face of death. The universe continues in spite of destruction incessantly going on. Truth triumphs over untruth. Love conquers hate. God eternally triumphs over Satan.

The non-co-operation that I conceived was to be a binding force. The split in the Congress ranks and still more clearly the Hindu-Muslim dissensions, show that our non-co-operation has proved a dissolving element. I must therefore endeavour to show its benignant aspect by advising suspension, and by total surrender on my part. In so doing I do not need to woo the No-changers. They claim to know non-violence and its implications. They pin their faith on the constructive programme to the exclusion of everything else. I abate not a jot or tittle from that programme. On the contrary, every step I am taking is calculated to give strength to it. The Hindu-Muslim question is of paramount importance. We want the weight of the whole country's opinion to be brought to bear upon it. We must stoop to conquer. Retaining every bit of non-co-operation in our own persons, we must make the path of those who do not believe in it smooth for helping us and helping the country in the constructive effort. The past four years have shown us the way. We have gained much, but we have lost also much. We must conserve the gains and regain the lost ground. The mass awakening is the greatest gain. We must hold to it. The generating of mutual strife is the greatest loss. We must repair it quickly. One cannot do so unless we suspend the terrible aspect of non-co-operation. The No-changers' duty, if they are anything worth, is self-effacement, silent work. They must not fight for power or office or name. They must work silently, result or no result. They must live on the sufferance of their fellow workers, the Swarajists and the Liberals, if they will rejoin the Congress.

The best way to show how to do it, is to do it myself. I

am therefore engaged in surrendering to the utmost of my capacity to the Swarajists as well as the Liberals. I have nothing to surrender to the No-changers ; for I am supposed to have no differences of opinion with them.

I must cease to be a party man and invite No-changers to do likewise.

We must not hinder the Swarajists in their very difficult task. Wherever No-changers cannot have a majority without a bitter struggle, they must gladly and willingly and gracefully yield to the Swarajists. If they have power or office, it must be by virtue of service, not by manipulation of the vote. The vote is there no doubt. But it must come, if it is to come, without the asking. It is not easy enough to see that service requires no power, no office, no prestige ? I would like every one of us to be a mere servant of the nation. I would like No-changers so to behave as to be wanted by Swarajists, Liberals, and all others. But whether they do so or not, I must act up to my faith. God weighed me at the last All India Congress Committee and found me wanting. My pride told me that I must yet fight the Swarajists. But the unquenchable spirit of service in me tells me that I must fight neither the Swarajists, nor the Liberals, nor the Englishmen. I must prove to everyone that I am what I profess to be,—their friend and servant. My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity. I can neither serve God nor humanity, if as an Indian I do not serve India, and as a Hindu I do not serve the Indian Mussalmans. Voluntary service means pure love. I must strive my utmost, during the coming year of grace, to express in every little act of mine whatever love I am capable of.

11th December, 1924

MY PATH

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is my good fortune and misfortune to receive attention in Europe and America at the present moment. It is my good fortune in that my message is being studied and understood in the West. It is my misfortune in that it is also being either unconsciously exaggerated or wilfully distorted. Every truth is self-acting and possesses inherent strength. I therefore remain unperturbed even when I find myself grossly misrepresented. A kind European friend has sent me a warning which shows, if the information given to him be true, that I am being either wilfully or accidentally misunderstood in Russia. Here is the message :

"The Russian representative at Berlin, Krestinsky, would be asked by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to give an official welcome to Gandhi (?) and to 'profit by the situation to undertake Belshevik propagandist activities among his followers.' Besides, Krestinsky would be given the task of inviting Gandhi to come to Russia. He is authorised to give a subsidy for the publication of propagandist literature among the oppressed peoples of Asia ; and he is to found, for the purposes of the Oriental Club and Secretariat, a purse in the name of Gandhi, for students who are of his ideas (of the ideas of Gandhi or of those of Moscow?). Finally three Hindus would be enlisted in this work. All this is published in the Russian newspapers like the *Rul* of Oct. 18th."

The message gives the clue to the reports that I was likely to be invited to visit Germany and Russia. I need not say that I have received no such invitation at all, nor have I the slightest desire to visit these great countries. I am conscious of the fact that the truth for which I stand has not yet been fully accepted by India. It has not yet been fully vindicated. My work in India is still in the experimental stage. In such circumstances

any foreign adventure on my part would be altogether premature. I should be fully satisfied if the experiment demonstrably succeeds in India.

My path is clear. Any attempt to use me for violent purposes is bound to fail. I have no secret methods. I know no diplomacy save that of truth. I have no weapon but non-violence. I may be unconsciously led astray for a while but not for all time. I have therefore well-defined limitations, within which alone I may be used. Attempts have been made before now to use me unlawfully more than once. They have failed each time so far as I am aware.

I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realise that however much I may sympathise with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is therefore really no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself. But my creed of non-violence not only does not preclude me but compels me even to associate with anarchists and all those who believe in violence. But that association is always with the sole object of weaning them from what appears to me to be their error. For experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion.



*1st January, 1925*

## IMPLICATION OF NON-VIOLENCE

Before the Subjects Committee broke up on the 25th, Mr Gandhi made a few observations on the duty of the delegates on the day following when the resolution containing the Agreement and the Spinning Franchise was to be moved in the open session of the Congress. It would be opposed by Maulana Hasrat Mohani, he said, and as representative of representatives he would warn them also against accepting the resolution without maturest deliberation. If they wanted to put the whole burden of work on him, he would tell them that his shoulders were incapable of carrying that burden and that he wanted to carry it only with the assistance of the country. Unless every one of them was prepared to give his assistance whole-heartedly, in spirit and in letter, the goal would not be achieved. Their purpose was to bring about the boycott of foreign cloth and that could be done only by the assistance of the poorest and the richest, men, women and children. They were making an honest and a proper attempt on behalf of the nation. After that boycott was achieved—and that was the only thing that they were capable of doing at the present moment—they could do a thousand other things, but after the boycott was achieved and not before.

He casually adverted to an amendment moved by Mr. Bhopatkar to the resolution about National Educational Institutions. That amendment had hurt him. Mr. Bhopatkar suggested that, when adults did not undertake to spin all their time and to wear khaddar on all occasions, it was unfair to expect children to spin and to wear khadi on all occasions and that therefore children also should be asked to wear khaddar on Congress and political occasions. That hurt Mr. Gandhi, because a construction was sought to be put on the franchise which it was incapable of bearing. "The franchise," said he, "lays down the minimum required of every Congressman. If

you do not satisfy that minimum requirement you forfeit the right of vote which is a sacred thing. But it does not mean that you will discard khaddar as soon as you leave the Congress and get back home. I would ask you to read the Agreement and the Resolution over and over again. They give the minimum demanded of every Congressman and the maximum expected of the nation. The Congress expects not only adults but children to wear khaddar on all occasions. As regards spinning, the clause about unwillingness has been put in for those who are constitutionally unwilling. It can hardly apply to children. I want you to work the franchise and the resolutions so that you make boycott of foreign cloth a possibility. If you go with the determination to work it honestly, you will have to spread yourselves in villages and expound to the people the message of the charkha. That will occupy all the energy of the best of us, and I have no doubt if that happens we will have a swinging success. I hope therefore that you will vote tomorrow intelligently and deliberately and counting the consequences. I may also tell you that you are not bound by your vote here and you are free to vote against, if you do not feel like accepting the resolution tomorrow."

All these remarks were addressed to No-changers and Pro-changers alike, but Mr. N. C. Kelkar taking it that they were meant only for the latter stood up and said: "I have heard your appeal which has so far been addressed to Swarajists. I want to hear you appeal to the No-changers now regarding the second part of the Pact which contains recognition of the work of the Councils on behalf of the Congress."

"I have always been told that there are among No-changers people who do not believe in the spinning franchise. My appeal to No-changers therefore is that they should take this agreement in the spirit in which it is intended by me and as it should be intended by them. I propose to assist the Swarajists to the best of my abilities and so far as one human being can do to assist them in their cause. I say deliberately their cause. It is true their cause is not only theirs or of the Congress

merely but of the nation. I am no judge. They have a perfect right to say, 'What is this charkha?' as I have an equally perfect right to say, 'What is this council?' They say councils are one of the most important items in our fight against the bureaucracy. I do not see eye to eye with them in their methods, but although I doubt their methods I can help the Swarajists and give them definite recognition for their policy in the Congress. I cast about around me to see how I was to help them. I hit on the Agreement. I saw I conferred no favour. It is their right, but I took some time before I saw it was their right, and seeing it is so I must not even mentally hinder their programme; on the contrary, I must make an attempt to have a conviction in me that what they are doing is right. I shall also ask you to do likewise. That is why I am going out of my way and putting myself in touch with every Swarajist. I tried to keep my mind absolutely open to their argument and their suggestions. That is the way in which I can give help to the Swarajists. But if it means that I have to help them by speaking on platforms or by supporting their resolutions, I am sorry I will not be able to do that, because my heart is not in it. That is not the way in which I understood and entered into agreement. These are my limitations. It is not that I am unwilling to do this, but I want to be convinced. Immediately I am convinced, nothing on this earth will prevent me from declaring myself a full-fledged Swarajist. Then they will have a right to expect from me all the twenty-four hours, *i. e.* the whole of my waking time. Today I cannot give them whole-hearted support. But within my sphere, I shall certainly give you encouraging and whole-hearted support. For example when Government want to damage you and your reputation, you will find me side by side with you and eager to assist you. I want to suffer with you and even if you reject my offer I will say to you 'for heaven's sake let me help you'. But when it comes to asking me to say in private that your policy is good, I must frankly confess that that is not the meaning I should put upon it. But I want you to say, if people ask you in private,

that even though you do not believe in the charkha yet they must spin. You say you do not disbelieve in the charkha. If you disbelieve you will be false to your trust if you do not reject the Agreement." "But" interposed Mr. Kelkar, "the work will be in proportion to the negative mental condition. You should be prepared to make some allowance for those Swarajists who keep some mental reservation, as many of them have already done so."

Mr. Gandhi. "If that mental reservation goes to the length of believing that the charkha will do no good, then you are bound to reject it."

Mr. Kelkar. "It may not go so far as that."

Mr. Gandhi. "Then it is all right. The co-operation in respect of the charkha that I expect from Swarajists is not of the same kind and measure as might be expected from me regarding councils and that is clearly put forth in the Agreement. I do not expect impossible things from you. What I do expect from you is just that amount of support, and the strictest honesty in giving it, to the measure of your ability and conviction and not a whit more. That is the spirit in which I want every member to approach this agreement and, if it is not approached in that spirit, I prophesy that our movement will be a failure. But I will not have failed even then. Of course I would be considered as an egregious fellow—an egotist—as some Europeans and some Indians too say. They say I claim to understand human nature as no one else does. I believe I am certainly right; others may be equally in the right, but if I do not believe in my rightness and my methods, I would be unfit to be at the helm of affairs. What I want to correct is that bad mentality, that mental reservation to which Mr. Kelkar refers. There should be no mental reservation that is not on paper. Let there be no mental reservation in us. Let none of us think that Swarajists are the enemies of India. I do not believe that even the poor anarchist is the enemy of India. He acts according to his lights. How can I judge? I can only judge by his action. To No-changers I say that, if you do not

believe in the charkha, you will ultimately find that there is no other alternative for you except the councils unless you resort to violent methods. That explains the paralysis of Stokes. He is a noble man, he has done considerable self-sacrifice, but being a foreigner he has not been able to react on the masses as some of us have done. He is therefore despairing of the success of the charkha and says that there is no other alternative but the councils. I had the privilege and pride to advise Shankarlal Banker and Anasuya Ben not to interfere with the mill-labourers, when they sought to go to law-courts, because non-co-operation did not satisfy them and they wanted immediate redress. Even so I say that for those whom the charkha does not satisfy there is no way other than the councils. There you can at least make a splash and get some little redress, some prisoners discharged. If today Swarajists will sacrifice their dearest principles and say that they want discharge of prisoners in the Andamans, they can get it. But they are true to their trust and they will make no such bargain, not even for the miserable ailing man in Yerawada Prison. I have often said and I repeat for the millionth time that if you do not believe in the charkha you must go to the councils. That is the secret of so many persons going to the councils to do something. After all those who have gone to the councils represent the best intellects in the country. They are seasonal soldiers. Where for example will you find an equal of the self-sacrifice of Pandit Malaviya? I knew him since 1901, when I saw him addressing the Congress, under the presidency of Sir Dinshaw Wachha. There is a great deal of work to his credit. He still swears by the council and he is no fool. Everytime I see him, my head bows to him. Who is Chittaranjan Das and who is Pandit Motilal Nehru? Why does my head bow to them? Why should they dress in this fashion? Motilal Nehru once lived like a prince. Only the other day he went to Lahore with a car and followed by an army of servants. Very few princes lived like him; and his once beautiful garden is growing weeds today, and not roses.

My head always bows before them and whenever I see them I feel that there is something incomplete in me, because I cannot see eye to eye with them, and understand their standpoint. Who again is Kelkar? He is the representative of one of the greatest of Indians who will go down to posterity and who will be worshipped as a god in this country which believes in millions of gods under that one Universal God. My appeal to you therefore is to cleanse your hearts and to have charity. Make your hearts as broad as the ocean. That is the teaching of the *Koran* and of the *Gita*. Do not judge others lest you be judged. There is that supreme Judge who can hang you, but He leaves you alive. There are so many enemies within you and around you but He protects and looks upon you with a kindly eye. Why should we say that their politics are corrupt? Heaven protect us from any such calumny of human nature. So long as the world lasts, so long will there be so many differences of opinion, and the greatest achievement of No-changers will be when they make their so called opponents their truest friends and convert them to the creed of the charkha. Believe me, if the No-changers have the gumption and do their duty and swear by the charkha and die for it, they will make them converts to their creed. If people do not take to the charkha, it is because they do not see its utility. It is for you to show it. I see the utility and I have unquenchable faith in it. It is faith that counts."

"To you who are Hindus and who are Mussalmans", he said referring to the story of a disciple he had read in jail in a book lent him by Maulana Hasrat Mohani. "to you I say, do even a trifling work, insignificant work, as did the proverbial disciple ten times, twenty times, fifty times, and you will see the beauty of detached and selfless service. If the charkha is no good for others, it is everything for me. The majestic stone image of Kashi Viswanath may be but a stone to Maulana Hasrat Mohani but it is no stone to me. When I see a cow, I do not see an animal to be eaten. It is for me a poem of pity. I worship it and I shall defend its worship against the whole

world. God there is only one ; but *He* enables me to see Him and worship Him in stone, in an Englishman, in a traitor if you will. For I shall not hate even a traitor. My religion takes me to that length. I say to every No-changer. if you are worthy of your creed and are non-violent, you will shake hands with the Swarajists and tell them, 'forgive us for what we have done.' You have no right to harbour ill-will against any one, or say a single word against him. Just follow that noble prescription. A nobler prescription I cannot give you and, if you follow it faithfully, all will be well at the end of the year."

M. D.

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*22nd January, 1925*

## A PRACTICAL EXPERIMENT IN NON-VIOLENCE

BY J. S. HOYLAND

William Penn was born in 1644. He was the son of a distinguished British admiral, who in 1655 had captured Jamaica for Cromwell, and afterwards had given valuable assistance in the Restoration of the Stuarts. William became a Quaker, or Friend, very greatly to his father's disgust. It was a time when the Quakers (or members of the Society of Friends) were exceedingly unpopular, and were undergoing severe persecution: indeed at that time, or shortly afterwards, there were probably at least four thousand of them in jail on account of their religious opinions.

William Penn himself was imprisoned, and underwent a trial which has become of historic importance in the development of British liberty, on account of the opposition aroused by the efforts of the judge to browbeat the jury into bringing in a verdict against him.

In 1682, Charles II discharged some of his old obligations to the Penn family by making a grant to William Penn of the vast area in eastern North America now known as the State of Pennsylvania. Penn immediately decided to use, as effectively

as possible, this opportunity for carrying out in a practical way his religious convictions, especially those regarding non-violence, non-resistance to evil and the treatment of all men with honesty and with love. The area assigned to him was inhabited by Red Indian tribes, whose fellows in the other areas of colonisation had been grossly maltreated by the European colonists. They were cheated and robbed: tyrannised over: made to sign treaties after having first been made so drunk that they were incapable of knowing what they were doing: persuaded to part with great areas of land in exchange for muskets or drink. In consequence, a deadly hatred had sprung up between the Red Indians and the White settlers in the districts bordering on that just granted to Penn. Constant wars occurred, many of which were marked by appalling atrocities; for the Red Indians were past-masters of the art of torturing prisoners, and, this led to savage reprisals from the Whites.

In spite of all this, and in accordance with his Quaker belief in non-violence, Penn decided that in his new settlement, which was afterwards called Pennsylvania, there should be no military defences of any kind,—‘no forts, no soldiers, no militia, even no arms.’ In view of the relations existing in surrounding regions between Whites and Red Indians, this appeared at the time to be a piece of criminal and suicidal folly, but it succeeded.

In the second place, Penn decided to treat the savages with scrupulous honesty. In accordance with his Quaker faith, he believed that in every man, however cruel or degraded, there is (although it may be hidden) the Divine Light of God’s Spirit. He therefore believed that he could appeal to this best element in the Red Indians, and by treating them with honesty and love establish his new settlement on the basis of friendly and peaceful relationships between the races.

Accordingly, as soon as he landed in Pennsylvania, he made a formal treaty with the Indian chiefs, entirely refusing—to their great astonishment—to get them drunk first. Every effort was made to guard against any exploitation by the Whites, and to establish permanent peace and agreement. Penn was so scru-



pulous, that he even refused to sanction an arrangement, which would have been exceedingly profitable to himself, for a trade-monopoly in the newly settled regions.

Later on, the Quakers in Pennsylvania, who held African slaves, became very uneasy in their minds regarding the legitimacy of slavery; and at a time when others regarded such an action as Quixotic in the highest degree, they set their slaves free. They not only did so, but 'an enquiry was held, and by a voluntary decision owners setting free their slaves gave to their slaves what was estimated as a just payment for past services.'

Penn's 'Holy Experiment,'—as this attempt to found a State on the principles of Christ's Sermon on the Mount was called,—succeeded in a very remarkable fashion. Time and again, fierce frontier wars broke out in the neighbouring settlements between the Whites and the Red Indians. There were horrible massacres and other atrocities. The surrounding colonies put considerable pressure upon the Quaker Assembly of Pennsylvania to arm the colonists, or to help in other ways in the wars. But the Quakers absolutely refused. The result was, that 'the province was entirely bare to the attack of enemies,—not a single armed man, nor, at the public expense, a single fortification to shelter the unhappy inhabitants.'

The courage involved in such an attitude may be realised by anyone who takes the trouble to enquire what happened to fighting-men (and still worse to women and children) who came under the power of the American Indians in the other colonies.

Yet the policy was justified, even when judged by the most superficial and 'worldly' standards. Amidst the devastations suffered by surrounding colonies in the Indian wars, Pennsylvania remained unscathed. 'Others were slain; others were massacred; but they were safe. Not a Quaker woman suffered assault; not a Quaker child was slain, not a Quaker man was tortured; and when at last, under pressure, the Quakers gave up the government of the State, and war broke out, and some Pennsylvanians were killed, only three Quakers were killed..

These there had so far fallen from their faith, as to carry weapons of defence.'

On one occasion, in an outlying station, a group of Friends (Quakers) were holding one of their meetings for the silent worship of God, when they became conscious that a war-party of Red Indians had stolen out of the neighbouring forest, and were preparing to attack them. In spite of the imminent and terrible danger, the Friends remained seated in their silent worship. 'Not a man, not a woman, not a child stirred. The fierce red men filed in and stood silently looking at them. The power of God came upon them, and they sat down and took their part in that strange meeting for worship. When it was over the Friends, as is their custom, shook hands with one another; but first they shook hands with those Red Indians and said, "We have been worshipping the great Father of us all." And the Indians said, "We have worshipped Him with you" !

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*12th February, 1925*

## A REVOLUTIONARY'S DEFENCE

BY M. K. GANDHI

A Correspondent, who has given his name but not his address, has sent me what he calls 'an open letter.' It is a letter in reply to my remarks on the revolutionary movement in my address to the Belgaum Congress. The letter breathes love of the country, fervour and a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is moreover written under a sense of wrong, said to have been done by me to the revolutionaries. I therefore gladly print the letter without the name. The address of the writer is not given. The following is the unchanged full text of the letter :

"I think it my duty to remind you of the promise you made some time back that you would retire from the political field at the time when the revolutionaries will once more merge from their silence and enter into the Indian political arena. The experiment with the non-violent non-co-operation movement is

now over. You wanted one complete year for your experiment, but the experiment lasted at least four complete years, if not five, and still do you mean to say that the experiment was not tried long enough?

"You are one of the greatest of personalities in the present age and under your direct guidance and inspiration, your programme was actually taken up for some reason or other, by the best men in the land. Thousands of young men, the flower of the youth of our country, embraced your cult with all the enthusiasm they could gather. Practically the whole nation responded to your call. We can safely say that the response was phenomenal if not miraculous. What more could you want? Sacrifice and sincerity on the part of your followers were not wanting; the most selfish of professional men gave up their professions. Young men of the country renounced all their worldly prospects and joined the forces under your banner; hundreds of families were rendered destitute for want of pecuniary income. Money was not wanting. You wanted one crore of rupees and you got more than you wanted. In fact I shall perhaps be not far from the truth if I say that the response to your call was more than you yourself expected. I venture to say that India followed your lead to the best of her ability and this I think can hardly be denied, and still do you mean to say that the experiment was not tried far enough?

"In fact, your programme failed for no fault of the Indians. You gave only a programme to the country, but you could not lead the nation to a victorious end. To say that non-violent non-co-operation failed because the people were not sufficiently non-violent is to argue like a lawyer and not like a prophet. The people could not be more non-violent than they were during the last few years. I would like to say that they were non-violent to a degree which smelt of cowardice. You would perhaps say that it was not this non-violence—the non-violence of the cowards that you wanted. But your programme did not contain that item which could transform cowards into heroes or which could detect and ultimately reject the cowards from the bands of

heroes. This was no fault of the people. And to say that the majority of non-co-operators were cowards and not heroes is to shirk responsibilities. To say this is rather to commit an outrage on the manliness of the nation. Indians are not cowards. Their heroism can always be compared with that of the best heroes of the world. To deny this is to deny history. When I speak of India's heroism I mean not only the heroism which sparkled in the annals of the glorious past, but I include the heroism that is manifesting itself in the present, because India is still not dead.

"What India wants is a true leader, a leader like Guru Gobind Singh or Guru Ramdas and Shivaji. India wants a Krishna who can give a worthy ideal, to be followed not by India alone, but by all humanity, by all the members of this humanity with diverse temperaments and capacities.

"Non-violent non-co-operation movement failed not because there was sporadic outburst of suppressed feelings here and there but because the movement was lacking in a worthy ideal. The ideal that you preached was not in keeping with Indian culture and traditions. It savoured of imitation. Your philosophy of non-violence at least the philosophy that you gave to the people for their acceptance was a philosophy arising out of despair. It was not the spirit of *Kshama* of the Indian Rishis, it was not the spirit of *Ahimsa* of the great Indian Yogins. It was an imperfect physical mixture of Tolstoyism and Buddhism and not a chemical mixture of East and West. You adopted the western methods of Congresses and Conferences and tried to persuade the whole nation to accept the spirit of *Ahimsa*, irrespective of *desh*, *kal* and *patra* like Tolstoy, but which was a matter of individual *Sadhana* with the Indians. And above all, you were and are still vague as regards India's ultimate political goal. This is miserable. Your idea of independence is not in consistence with Indian ideals. India stands for *Sarvam paravasam dukkham Sarvam at mavasham sukham* and for the ideal that individual existence is solely for the purpose of humanity and through humanity serving God.

*Jagathitaya Srikrishnayacha.* The non-violence that India preaches is not non-violence for the sake of non-violence, but non-violence for the good of humanity, and when this good for humanity will demand violence and bloodshed, India will not hesitate to shed blood just in the same way as a surgical operation necessitates the shedding of blood. To an ideal Indian, violence or non-violence has the same significance provided they ultimately do good to humanity. '*Vinashaya cha Dushkritam*' was not spoken in vain.

"To my mind therefore, the ideal that you gave to the nation or the programme of action that you laid before it is neither consistent with Indian culture nor practicable as a political programme.

"It is simply inconceivable and incomprehensible to think that you still dare to entertain the slightest hope that England can be just and generous out of her free will,—this England "which believes in Jallianwallabagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence," this England which tried the O'Dwyer-Nair case and gave judgment in favour of barbarism. If you have an iota of faith left in you in the good sense of the British Government, then according to you where is the necessity of any programme at all? If there is any necessity of any movement in order to bring the British government to their senses, then why speak of the honesty and good intentions of the British Government? It seems that the prophet in you is gone and you are once more a lawyer defending a weak case; or perhaps you are always an exponent—a mighty exponent—of half-truths only. A sovereign independent Indian Republic in alliance or in federation with the other independent nations of the earth is one thing, and self-governing India within this imperialistic British Empire is perfectly another thing. Your sentiment of remaining within the British Empire reminds one of the many Himalayan miscalculations that you have repeatedly committed. It seems to me that you have compromised a worthy ideal with the present needs of a false expediency and this is the reason that

you have failed to capture the imagination of the youths of the country,—youths who could dare and who are still daring to go against your wishes although they unhesitatingly recognise you as one of the greatest of personalities of the modern age. These are the Indian revolutionaries. They have now decided to remain silent no more and therefore they request you to retire from the political field or else to direct the political movement in a way so that it may be a help and not a hindrance to the revolutionary movement. They suspended their activities so long simply to comply to your requests direct and indirect, and they went further. They actually helped you in the carrying out of your programme to the best of their abilities. But now the experiment is over and therefore the revolutionaries are free from their promise, or, as a matter of fact, they promised to remain silent only for a year and no more.

“Further, I would like to point out that you have misjudged the revolutionaries in many respects when you blamed them in your recent presidential address in the 39th Congress. You said that the revolutionaries are retarding India's progress. I do not know what you mean by this word ‘progress.’ If you mean political progress, then can you deny that every political progress that India has already made however little that might be, has been made chiefly by the sacrifices and the efforts of the revolutionary party? Can you deny that the Bengal partition was annulled through the efforts of the Bengal revolutionaries? Can you doubt that the Morley-Minto reform was the outcome of the Indian revolutionary movement? Can you be blind to the forces of this revolutionary movement which was mainly though not wholly instrumental in bringing about the Montford reform? I shall not be very much surprised if you will answer these queries in the affirmative but I can assure you that the British government realises the potentiality of this movement. Even the late Mr. Montague expressed to an Indian of position and rank that he took the trouble of coming to India and risked his life simply due to the activities of the young Indian revolutionaries.

If you mean that these reforms are no index to true progress, then I would venture to say that this revolutionary movement has achieved no mean progress in the moral advancement of India. Indians were miserably afraid of death and this revolutionary party once more made the Indians realise the grandeur and the beauty that lie in dying for a noble cause. The revolutionaries have once again demonstrated that death has a certain charm and is not always a dreadful thing. To die for one's own beliefs and convictions, to die in the consciousness that by so dying one is serving God in the nation, to accept death or to risk one's life when there is every probability of death, for the cause which one honestly believes to be just and legitimate,—is this no moral progress?

“To cling to one's cherished ideal even in adversity and temporary failures—not to be swayed away by temporary excitements and by the seemingly noble doctrines of an alluring personality, not to be daunted by long long terms of imprisonment with hard labour, to be true to one's own self for years together—is this tenacity of purpose, this sturdiness in the character no index to true moral progress that India has made? And is this not the manifest outcome of the revolutionary ideal?”

“You have said to the revolutionaries, “You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death.” But the revolutionaries are at a sad loss to understand the meaning of this sentence. Do you mean to say that the revolutionaries are responsible for the deaths of 70 men who were condemned in the Chauri Chaura trial? Do you mean to say that the revolutionaries are responsible for the bombing and killing of innocent people at Jallianwallabagh and Gujarnwalla? Did the revolutionaries during their struggle for the last twenty years, in the past or in the present, ever ask the starving millions to take part in the revolutionary struggle? The revolutionaries have perhaps a better knowledge of the mass psychology than most of the present leaders. And this was the reason that they never wanted to deal with the masses until

they became sure of their own strength. They always believed that the masses of Northern India were ready for any emergency and they were also right in thinking the Northern India mass as a dense matter of high explosive, dangerous to be handled carelessly. It was you and your lieutenants who misjudged the sentiment of the masses and dragged them into the Satyagraha movement, people who were groaning under a thousand oppressions from within and without, where the lightning of anger laid unperceived and you had to pay the penalty for it. But can you give any instance where the revolutionaries dragged unwilling souls into the valley of death?

"But if you mean by the sentence that innocent people are being harassed, imprisoned and put to death due to the activities of the revolutionaries, then I would unhesitatingly and honestly admit, as far as my knowledge goes, that not a single individual was hanged who was innocent of any revolutionary activity, and about imprisonments and tortures, I may say that many innocent men were actually harassed and put to torture. But can the revolutionary party be made responsible for the atrocities committed by a foreign government? The foreign government is determined to crush any manifestation of manhood in the nation, in any form whatsoever; but in so crushing, the government is very liable to commit blunders and harass and imprison and put to torture cowards along with the heroes; but are the brave people to be blamed for the sufferings of the cowards? Moreover these sufferings cannot be termed as martyrs' death.

"Lastly, I would like to say something about the remarks you have made in connection with the strength of the British Empire. You have said to the revolutionaries "Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organised than you are." But is it not shameful that a handful of Englishmen are able to rule India, not by the free consent of the Indian people but by the force of the sword? And if the English can be well-armed and well-organised why can the Indians be not better armed and better organised still,—Indians who are saturated with the high principles of spirituality?



Indians are men in the same sense as the Englishmen are. Then, what on earth makes the Indians so helpless as to think that they can never be better organised than their English masters? By what argument and logic of fact can you disprove the possibilities in which the revolutionaries have immense faith? And the spirit of non-violence that arises out of this sense of helplessness and despair can never be the non-violence of the strong, the non-violence of the Indian Rishis. This is *tamas* pure and simple.

“Excuse me Mahatmaji, if I am severe in criticising your philosophy and principles. You have criticised the revolutionaries most unsympathetically and even you went so far as to describe them as the enemies of the country, simply because they differ from your views and methods. You preach tolerance but you have been violently intolerant in your criticisms of the revolutionaries. The revolutionaries have risked their everything to serve their motherland, and if you cannot help them, at least be not intolerant towards them.”

I never made any promise to anybody as to when and how I should retire from the political life of the country. But I did say and now repeat that I would certainly retire if I find that India does not imbibe my message *and* that India wants a bloody revolution. I should have no part in that movement because I do not believe in its utility either for India, or, which is the same thing, for the world.

I do believe that there was a wonderful response to the call of non-co-operation but I do also believe the success was more than proportionate to the measure of non-co-operation. The wonderful awakening of the masses is a standing demonstration of the fact.

I do believe, too, that the country exercised great self-restraint; but I must reiterate my opinion that the observance of non-violence was far below the required standard.

I do not believe that ‘my philosophy’ is an indifferent mixture of Tolstoy and Buddha. I do not know what it is

except that it is what I feel to be true. It sustains me. I owe much to Tolstoy and much to Buddha. I still somehow or other fancy that 'my philosophy' represents the true meaning of the teachings of the *Gita*. I may be totally mistaken. Such a mistake can do no harm either to me or to anybody. For the source of my inspiration is of no consequence if what I stand for be unadulterated truth.

Let the philosophy I represent be tested on its own merits. I hold that the world is sick of armed rebellions. I hold too that whatever may be true of other countries, a bloody revolution will not succeed in India. The masses will not respond. A movement in which masses have no active part can do no good to them. A successful bloody revolution can only mean further misery for the masses. For it would be still foreign rule for them. The non-violence I teach is active non-violence of the strongest. But the weakest can partake in it without becoming weaker. They can only be the stronger for having been in it. The masses are far bolder today than they ever were. A non-violent struggle necessarily involves construction on a mass scale. It cannot therefore lead to *tamas* or darkness or inertia. It means a quickening of the national life. That movement is still going on silently almost imperceptibly but none the less surely.

I do not deny the revolutionaries the heroism and sacrifice. But heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause are so much waste of splendid energy and hurt the good cause by drawing away attention from it by the glamour of the misused heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause.

I am not ashamed to stand erect before the heroic and self-sacrificing revolutionary because I am able to pit an equal measure of non-violent men's heroism and sacrifice untarnished by the blood of the innocent. Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man.

I invite the attention of the revolutionaries to the three great hindrances to Swaraj—the incomplete spread of the spinning-wheel, the discord between Hindus and Mussalmans and the inhuman ban upon the suppressed classes. I ask them patiently to take their due share in this work of patient construction. It may not be spectacular enough. But on that very account it requires all the heroic patience, silent and sustained effort and self-effacement of which the tallest among the revolutionaries is capable. Impatience will blur the revolutionary's vision and lead him astray. Slow and inglorious self-imposed starvation among the starving masses is every time more heroic than the death on the scaffold under false exaltation.

All criticism is not intolerance. I have criticised the revolutionary because I have felt for him. He has the same right to hold me to be in error as I believe him to be in error.

There are other points that are covered by the 'open letter.' But I have omitted to refer to them because I think that they can be easily answered by the reader and in no case do they touch the vital issue.

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*12th March, 1925*

### TO ANOTHER REVOLUTIONARY

I am afraid your advice to me to retire from public life is not so easy to follow as it is to give. I claim to be a servant of India and therethrough of humanity. I cannot always have it my own way. If I have had my share of fair weather I must face the foul too. I must not abandon the field of battle so long as I feel that I am wanted. When my work is done and I have become a disabled or worn out soldier, I shall be put away. Till then I must continue to do my work and endeavour to neutralise in all the ways accessible to me the poison of the revolutionary activity. A well-meaning and self-sacrificing physician who prescribes arsenic when he should have given fresh grape juice is one to be shunned in spite of his good intentions and even.

sacrifice. I invite the revolutionaries not to commit suicide and drag with them unwilling victims. India's way is not Europe's, India is not Calcutta and Bombay. India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages. If the revolutionaries are as many let them spread out into these villages and try to bring sunshine into the dark dungeons of the millions of their countrymen. That would be worthier of their ambition and love of the land than the exciting and unquenchable thirst for the blood of English officials and those who are assisting them. It is nobler to try to change their spirit than to take their lives.

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TO R. S. S. R.

You have not given your address. If, in your opinion the *Gita* advocates violence in the other chapters, the verses, you quote from the 12th, do not take us much further along non-violence. But I do not agree with you that the *Gita* advocates and teaches violence in any part of it. See the concluding discourse at the end of chapter II. Although that chapter lends itself to a violent interpretation, the concluding verses seem to me to preclude any such interpretation. The fact is that a literal interpretation of the *Gita* lands one in a sea of contradictions. The letter truly killeth, the spirit giveth life. M. K. G.

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9th April, 1925

## MY FRIEND THE REVOLUTIONARY

BY M. K. GANDHI

The Revolutionary whom I endeavoured to answer some time ago has returned to the charge and challenges me to answer certain questions that arise out of my previous answers to him. I gladly do so. He seems to me to be seeking light even as I am and argues fairly and without much passion. So long as he continues to reason calmly I promise to continue the discussion. His first question is :

“Do you really believe that the revolutionaries of India are less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the Swarajists, Moderates and Nationalists? May I challenge you to keep before the public the names of some Swarajists, Moderates or Nationalists who have embraced the death of a martyr for the sake of the motherland? Can you be bold, nay, arrogant enough to deny it in the face of historical facts that the revolutionaries have sacrificed more for their country than any other party which professes to serve India? You are ready to make compromises with other parties, while you abhor our party and describe the sentiments as poison. Will you not tremble to use the same word of intolerance for the sentiments of any other party which is decidedly inferior in the eyes of God and man to us? What makes you shrink from calling them misguided patriots or venomous reptiles?”

I do not regard the revolutionaries of India to be less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the rest. But I respectfully contend that their sacrifice, nobility and love are not only a waste of effort, but being ignorant and misguided, do and have done more harm to the country than any other activity. For, the revolutionaries have retarded the progress of the country. Their reckless disregard of the lives of their opponents has brought on repression that has made those that do not take part in their warfare more cowardly than they were before. Repression does good only to those who are prepared for it. The masses are not prepared for the repression that follows in the trail of revolutionary activities and unwittingly strengthen the hands of the Government which the revolutionaries are seeking to destroy. It is my certain conviction that had the Chauri Chaura murders not taken place the movement attempted at Bardoli would have resulted in the establishment of Swaraj. Is it, therefore, any wonder that with such opinion I call the revolutionary a misguided and therefore dangerous patriot? I would call my son a misguided and dangerous nurse who because of his ignorance and blind love fought at the cost of his own life the physicians whose system

of medicine no doubt did me harm but which I could not escape for want of will or ability. The result would be that I would lose a noble son and bring down upon my head the wrath of the physicians who suspecting my complicity in the son's activities might seek to punish me in addition to continuing their harmful course of treatment. If the son had attempted to convince the physicians of their error or me of my weakness in submitting to the treatment, the physicians might have mended their way or I might have rejected the treatment or would at least have escaped the wrath of the physicians. I do make certain compromises with the other parties because, though I disagree with them, I do not regard their activities as positively harmful and dangerous as I regard the revolutionaries'. I have never called the revolutionaries 'venomous reptiles'. But I must refuse to fall into hysterics over their sacrifices, however great they may be, even as I must refuse to give praise to the sacrifice of my misguided son for his sacrifice in the illustration supposed by me. I feel sure that those who through—insufficient reasoning or false sentiment secretly or openly give praise to the revolutionaries for their sacrifices do harm to them and the cause they have at heart. The writer has asked me to quote instances of non-revolutionary patriots who gave their lives for the country. Well, two completed cases occur to me as I write these notes. Gokhale and Tilak died for their country. They worked in almost total disregard of their health and died much earlier than they need have. There is no necessary charm about death on the gallows; often such death is easier than a life of drudgery and toil in malarious tracts. I am quite satisfied that among the Swarajists and others there are men who will any day lay down their lives if they felt convinced that their death would bring deliverance to the country. I suggest to my friend the revolutionary that death on the gallows serves the country only when the victim is a 'spotless lamb'.

" 'India's path is not Europe's.' Do you really believe it? Do you mean to say that warfare and organisation of army was

not in existence in India, before she came in contact with Europe? Warfare for fair cause—Is it against the spirit of India? *Vinasaya cha Dushkritam*—Is it something imported from Europe? Granted that it is, will you be fanatic enough not to take from Europe what is good? Do you believe that nothing good is possible in Europe? If conspiracy, bloodshed and sacrifice for fair cause are bad for India, will they not be bad as well for Europe?”

I do not deny that India had armies, warfare etc., before she came in contact with Europe. But I do say that it never was the normal course of Indian life. The masses unlike those of Europe were untouched by the warlike spirits. I have already said in these pages that I ascribe to the Gita, from which the writer has quoted the celebrated verse, a totally different meaning from that ordinarily given. I do not regard it as a description of, or an exhortation to, physical warfare. And in any case according to the verse quoted it is God the All Knowing who descends to the earth to punish the wicked. I must be pardoned if I refuse to regard every revolutionary as an all-knowing God or an *avatar*. I do not condemn everything European. But I condemn for all climes and for all times secret murders and unfair methods even for a fair cause.

“‘India is not Calcutta and Bombay.’ May I most respectfully put it before your Mahatmaship that the revolutionaries know the geography of India enough to be able to know this geographical fact easily. We hold this fact as much as we hold that a few spinners do not form the Indian nation. We are entering villages and have been successful everywhere. Can you not believe that they, the sons of Shivaji, Pratap and Ranjit can appreciate our sentiments with more readiness and depth than anything else? Don’t you think that armed and conspired resistance against something satanic and ignoble is infinitely more befitting for any nation, especially Indian, than the prevalence of effortlessness and philosophical cowardice? I mean the cowardice which is pervading the length and breadth of India owing to the preaching of your theory of non-violence or

more correctly the wrong interpretation and misuse of it. Non-violence is not the theory of the weak and helpless, it is the theory of the strong. We want to produce such men in India, who will not shrink from death whenever it may come and in whatever form—will do the good and die. This is the spirit with which we are entering the villages. We are not entering the villages to extort votes for councils and district boards, but our object is to secure co-martyrs for the country who will die and a stone will not tell where his poor corpse lies. Do you believe like Mazzini that ideas ripen quickly, when nourished by the blood of martyrs? ”

It is not enough to know the geographical difference between Calcutta and the villages outside the railways. If the revolutionaries knew the organic difference between these, they would, like me, become spinners. I own that the few spinners we have do not make India. But I claim that it is possible to make all India spin as it did before, and so far as sympathy is concerned millions are even now in sympathy with the movement, but they never will be with the revolutionary. I dispute the claim that the revolutionaries\* are succeeding with the villagers. But if they are, I am sorry. I shall spare no pains to frustrate the effort. Armed conspiracies against something satanic is like matching satans against satan. But since one satan is one too many for me, I would not multiply him. Whether my activity is effortlessness or all efforts remains perhaps to be seen. Meanwhile, if it has resulted in making two yards of yarn spin where only one was spinning, it is so much to the good. Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor. And if I could be persuaded that revolutionary activity has dispelled cowardice, it will go a long way to soften my abhorrence of the method, however much I may still oppose it on principle. But he who runs may see that owing to the non-violent movement, the villagers have assumed a boldness to which only a few years ago they were strangers. I admit that non-violence is a weapon essentially of the strong. I also admit that often cowardice is mistaken for non-violence.



My friend begs the question when he says a revolutionary is one who 'does the good and dies.' That is precisely what I question. In my opinion he does the evil and dies. I do not regard killing or assassination or terrorism as good in any circumstances whatsoever. I do believe that ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs. But a man who dies slowly of jungle fever in service bleeds as certainly as the one on the gallows. And if the one who dies on the gallows is not innocent of another's blood, he never had ideas that deserved to ripen.

"One of your objections against the revolutionaries is that their movement is not mass-movement, consequently the mass at large will be very little benefitted by the revolution, for which we are preparing. That is indirectly saying that we shall be most benefitted by it. Is it really what you mean to say? Do you believe that those persons who are ever ready to die for their country—those mad lovers of their country—I mean the revolutionaries of India in whom the spirit of *Nishkama Karma* reigns, will betray their motherland and secure privileges for a life—this trifling life? It is true that we will not drag the mass just now in the field of action, because we know that it is weak, but when the preparation is complete we shall call them in the open field. We profess to understand the present Indian psychology full well, because we daily get the chance of weighing our brethren along with ourselves. We know that the mass of India is after all Indian, it is not weak by itself but there is want of efficient leaders; so when we have begot the number of leaders required by constant propaganda and preaching, and the arms, we shall not shrink from calling, and if necessary, dragging the mass in the open field to prove that they are the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh. Besides we have been constantly preaching that the mass is not for the revolution but the revolution is for the mass. Is it sufficient to remove your prejudice in this connection?"

I neither say nor imply that the revolutionary benefits if the:

masses do not. On the contrary, and as a rule, the revolutionary never benefits in the ordinary sense of the word. If the revolutionaries succeed in attracting, not 'dragging' the masses to them, they will find that the murderous campaign is totally unnecessary. It sounds very pleasant and exciting to talk of 'the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Partap and Govind Singh'. But is it true? Are we all descendants of these heroes in the sense in which the writer understands it? We are their countrymen, but their descendants are the military classes. We may in future be able to obliterate caste, but today it persists and therefore the claim put up by the writer cannot in my opinion be sustained.

"Last of all, I shall ask you to answer these questions: Was Guru Govind Singh a misguided patriot because he believed in warfare for noble cause? What will you like to say about Washington, Garibaldi and Lenin? What do you think of Kamal Pasha and De Valera? Would you like to call Shivaji and Pratap, well meaning and sacrificing physicians, who prescribed arsenic when they should have given fresh grape-juice? Will you like to call Krishna Europeanised because he believed also in the *vinasha* of *dushkritas*?

This is a hard or rather awkward question. But I dare not shirk it. In the first instance Guru Govind Singh and the others whose names are mentioned did not believe in secret murder. In the second, these patriots knew their work and their men, whereas the modern Indian revolutionary does not know his work. He has not the men, he has not the atmosphere, that the patriots mentioned had. Though my views are derived from my theory of life I have not put them before the nation on that ground. I have based my opposition to the revolutionaries on the sole ground of expedience. Therefore, to compare their activities with those of Guru Govind Singh or Washington or Garibaldi or Lenin would be most misleading and dangerous. But by test of the theory of non-violence I do not hesitate to say that it is highly likely that had I lived as their contemporary and in the respective coun-

tries I would have called every one of them a misguided patriot, even though a successful and brave warrior. As it is, I must not judge them. I disbelieve history so far as details of acts of heroes are concerned. I accept broad facts of history and draw my own lessons for my conduct. I do not want to repeat it in so far as the broad facts contradict the highest laws of life. But I positively refuse to judge men from the scanty material furnished to us by history. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Kamal Pasha and De Valera too I cannot judge. But for me as a believer in non-violence out and out they cannot be my guides in life in so far as their faith in war is concerned. I believe in Krishna perhaps more than the writer. But my Krishna is the Lord of the universe, the creator, preserver and destroyer of us all. He may destroy because He creates. But I must not be drawn into a philosophical or religious argument with my friends. I have not the qualifications for teaching my philosophy of life. I have barely qualifications for practising the philosophy I believe. I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good—wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. I admit, and assure my revolutionary friends, it is a painful climb but the pain of it is a positive pleasure for me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next. But all that pain and the pleasure are for me. The revolutionaries are at liberty to reject the whole of my philosophy. To them I merely present my own experiences as a co-worker in the same cause even as I have successfully presented them to the Ali Brothers and many other friends. They can and do applaud whole-heartedly the action of Mustafa Kamal Pasha and possibly De Valera and Lenin. But they realise with me that India is not like Turkey or Ireland or Russia and that revolutionary activity is suicidal at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck.

*30th April, 1925*

## TO 'REVOLUTIONARY IN MAKING'

You will pardon me for not reproducing your letter. I would have gladly published it, if it was a presentable letter—not that the language of your letter is at all in bad taste or violent. On the contrary you have attempted to present your case fairly and calmly, but the argument is loosely and unconvincingly put. What you want to say is that the revolutionary does no violence because when he takes the life of his adversary he does so to benefit him *i. e.* his soul, even as a surgeon performs a painful operation on a patient for his (the latter's) good. You argue that the adversary has a vile body which vitiates the soul and that the sooner it is destroyed the better for him.

Now the analogy of the surgeon is wrong because he is concerned merely with the body. He operates on the body to benefit the body. His science ignores the soul. Who can say how many bodies have been required by surgeons at the expense of the soul? But the revolutionary destroys the body for the supposed benefit of the adversary's soul. In the first instance, I do not know a single revolutionary who has ever thought of the adversary's soul. His single aim has been to benefit the country even though the adversary may perish body and soul. In the second instance, since you believe in the Law of Karma, a compulsory destruction of a body merely paves the way for the certain of a tougher body for the same soul. For, the man whose body is destroyed will weave for himself a body after his own longing. That to my mind is the meaning of the persistence of evil and the crimes we see about us. The more we punish, the more persistent crimes become. They may change colour, but the substance is the same. The way to serve the adversary's soul is to appeal to the soul. It defies destruction, but it is amenable to appeals tuned to the required pitch. Souls must react upon souls. And since non-violence is essentially a quality of the soul, the only effective appeal to the soul must lie through

non-violence. And do we not arrogate to ourselves infallibility when we seek to punish our adversaries? Let us remember that they regard us to be as harmful to society as we regard them. It is idle to drag in the name of Krishna. Either we believe him to be the very God or we do not. If we do, we impute to him omniscience and omnipotence. Such a one can surely destroy. But we are puny mortals ever erring and ever revising our views and opinions. We may not without coming to grief ape Krishna, the inspirer of the Gita. You should remember too that the so-called Christians of the middle ages thought exactly as you believe revolutionaries think. They burnt heretics for the benefit of the latter's souls. We of today laugh at the atrocious folly of these ignorant so-called Christians of the middle ages. We now know that the inquisitors were wrong, their victims were totally innocent.

I am glad you are turning the wheel. Its silent revolution will bring you peace and bring the freedom you love much nearer than you imagine. Do not mind your fickle friends who have deserted you leaving behind a legacy of 'bug-ridden bed born' slivers. If I were you, I would re-card these slivers. You may not know carding. If you do not, you must go to the nearest man who knows it and learn the beautiful art of carding. He is an indifferent spinner who knows not how to card. You need not be afraid that the method of non-violence is a slow long drawn out process. It is the swiftest the world has seen, for it is the surest. You will see that it will overtake the revolutionaries whom you imagine I have misjudged. To point out errors is not to misjudge. I am devoting so much space to them because I want their exhaustless energy to be directed in the right channel.

M. K. G.

“SEEKER AFTER TRUTH”

One who describes himself a seeker after truth sends me his own reflections arising out of my discussion of revolutionary views. He tells me that at first he was a Non-Co-operator, then, he began to think that Non-Co-operation was merely a social movement and that the revolutionary was the only true political movement. At Belgaum again he began to think anew. I condense below his reflections without in any way whatsoever changing the sense or his language :—

“The Revolutionary is certainly patriotic. He is a hero. He is prepared to give up his life in the cause of the Motherland. But his very aim is wrong.

“What is it the Revolutionary wants? Freedom for the country. So far quite right. Why is the freedom required? So that the people may be happy. This also is right. How can the people be happy? By changing the system of Government.

“Now here comes the real point.

“Let us just consider our state. We Indians have ever so many virtues. But what of our weaknesses? We have become cowards. We have taken to several vices. Amongst the Hindus we have the untouchables. We till the ground and produce grains, vegetable and such things which could very easily feed us all. All the same the fact remains that the major portion of us are half-starving. We all weave and work in mills. Still we are but half-clad. We have got enough clay. We know how to make bricks and build beautiful houses. Still there are several of us who have no other place than beneath trees to live.

“No doubt the foreigners are to a very large extent to blame for our difficulties. Wrong though it may be, that is our sincere opinion. But what of our own share of the responsibility? Are we not at all to blame?

“Or suppose that we with the help of the revolvers or such

things do drive away the enemies? Is it not possible for any other foreigner to occupy the position of the present foreigner?" After all warfare is but a sort of gambling.

"I do not propose to deal with the utility or otherwise of Non-violence, maintaining armies and such things. I consider myself absolutely incompetent to discuss this subject. Suffice it to say that I am beginning to understand Gandhiji's view on this subject and his views appear to me to be right.

"The United States of America, it is generally said, have a very good Government. What of the several plots, the several murders, dacoities, swindlings etc, that take place there? The Bolshevik system is considered to be good. Why then the daily increasing capital punishments, riots and such things? Any number of such examples can be given.

"To dispose of Gandhiji's ideas as merely idealistic and impracticable is wrong; much more so for a revolutionary to do so. For he has really the welfare of the people at heart.

"It is not impossible to bring about a situation where the world will be an abode of happiness. The best thing of course is to do good to others. But at present you need not even go so far. Do good to your own self.

"Don't you waste a good portion of your time? Don't you send out crores of your rupees to other countries by purchasing their cotton goods? Spin and make good use of your time. Weave your own cloth and use the same and save your crores.

"This spinning, I take it, does not merely mean spinning of cotton yarn. I take it to mean home industry. It is a solution as much for any other country as for India.

"Removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and such things are internal. It is self-purification. Every one has his own dirt to wash. The Hindus have the untouchability, the Indians the Hindu-Muslim rupture. It is thus for every country to wash itself of its own curse.

"The revolutionary will thus see that he has more useful work in spreading this wonderful cure of the world-illness.

He serves not only himself and his countrymen, but he serves the whole world.

"When you have purified yourself, and when you have become self-sufficient how on earth can anyone levy tax or collect by any other means money from you without the co-operation? It is impossible to govern without the co-operation of the governed. Now we the governed are not pure, we are not self-sufficient. But we will soon become such. This is the real meaning of Non-violent Non-co-operation. Fear none but your conscience. Why do you hide and throw bombs on the foreigner? Come out and tell him boldly that we hold him to a large extent responsible for our weaknesses, fear not if he sends you to jail. Tell him also that you propose as much to charge him as your own self. Thus you will be doing good both to your own self and to the person whom you now consider to be your enemy."

M. K. G.

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*7th May, 1925*

## AT IT AGAIN

BY M. K. GANDHI,

My revolutionary friend has returned to the charge, but I must tell him that he has not been as patient with his composition as before. He has introduced in his letter under discussion much irrelevant matter and has argued loosely. So far as I can see, he has exhausted all his argument and has nothing new to say. But should he write again, I advise him to write his letter more carefully and boil down his thoughts. I have been obliged to do that for him this time. But as he is seeking light, let him read carefully what I write, then think out his thoughts calmly and then write them out clearly and briefly. If it is merely questions he has to ask let him simply write them out without arguing to convince me. I do not pretend to know everything about the revolutionary movement, but as I have been obliged to think, observe and write a great deal, there is very little new that he



can tell me. Whilst, therefore, I promise to keep an open mind, I ask him, please, to spare a busy servant of the nation and a true friend of the revolutionary the labour of reading much that he need not read. I am anxious to keep in touch with the revolutionary and I can only do so through these columns. I have a soft corner for him in my heart for there is one thing in common between him and me—the ability to suffer. But as I humbly believe him to be mistaken and misguided, I desire to wean him from his error or in the process myself be weaned from mine.

My revolutionary friend's first question is :

“ ‘The revolutionaries have retarded the progress of the country.’ Do you differ with your own view, when you wrote in connection with the Bengal Partition : ‘After the Partition people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering. This spirit must be considered to be the chief result of the Partition. . . . That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and written openly. . . . People, young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face ; it no longer awed them. They did not fear even a row, or being imprisoned. Some of the ‘best sons of India’ are at present in banishment.’ The movement which followed the Partition or more correctly which was the manifestation of the unrest of the people was the revolutionary movement, and the best sons of India you speak of mostly revolutionaries or semi-revolutionaries. How is it that these so-called ignorant and misguided persons were able to reduce if not remove the cowardice of India? Would you be so intolerant as to call the revolutionaries ignorant, because they cannot understand your peculiar dogma of non-violence?’ ”

There is no difference between the view expressed in *Indian Home Rule* from which the writer has quoted and the views now expressed by me. Those who led the partition movement, whatever and whoever they were, undoubtedly shed the fear of Englishmen. That was a distinct service to the country. But bravery and self-sacrifice need not kill. Let my friend remember

that *Indian Home Rule* as the booklet itself states was written in answer to the revolutionary's arguments and methods. It was an attempt to offer the revolutionary something infinitely superior to what he had, retaining the whole of the spirit of self-sacrifice and bravery that was to be found in the revolutionary. I do not call the revolutionary ignorant, merely because he does not understand or appreciate my method but because he does not even appear to me to understand the art of warfare. Every one of the warriors whom my friend quotes knew his art and had his men.

The second question is :

"Was Terence MacSwiney a 'spotless lamb' when he died of hunger-strike of 71 days? Please remember that he was to the last an advocate of conspiracy, bloodshed and terrorism, and maintained his ideas expressed in his famous book 'Principles of Freedom.' If you can call MacSwiney a spotless lamb, will you not be ready to use the same term for Gopimohan Shaha?"

I am sorry to say I do not know enough of the life of MacSwiney to be able to give an opinion. But if he advocated 'conspiracy, bloodshed and terrorism' his method was open to the same objections that have been advanced in these pages. I never regarded him as a 'spotless lamb.' I gave my humble opinion when his fast was declared, that from my standpoint it was an error. I do not justify every fast.

The third question is :

"You believe in *Varnas*. Therefore, it is self-evident that you hold the *Kshatriyas* to be of the same utility as any other *Varna*. The revolutionaries profess to be *Kshatriyas* in this *Nihkshatriya* epoch in India. *Kshatat trayate iti Kshatriyas.*' I consider this state of India to be the greatest *Kshata* which India has ever met with, in other words this is the time when the need of *Kshatriyas* in India is the uttermost. Manu, the Prince of Hindu lawgivers prescribes four ways for the *Kshatriya* : '*sama, dana, bheda, danda*,' In this connection I reproduce a passage from Vivekananda, which I think will greatly help you to comprehend the matter full well.

“ ‘All great teachers have taught ‘Resist not evil,’ have taught that the non-resisting is the highest moral ideal. We all know that if, in the present state of world, people try to carry out this doctrine, the whole social fabric would fall to pieces, society would be destroyed, the violent and the wicked will take possession of our property, and possibly take our lives also. Even one day of such non-resistance would lead to the utter dissolution of the country.’ I know what you will do in this awkward position, you will try to interpret it differently, but you shall find that he has left no room for such misinterpretation, because he instantly adds, ‘some of you have read perhaps the *Bhagvad-Gita* and many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished at the first chapter wherein our Shri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and coward, on account of his refusal to fight or offer resistance, because his adversaries were his friends and relatives—his refusal on the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love. There is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all things the two extremes are alike; the extreme positive and the extreme negative are always similar; when the vibrations of light are too slow we do not see them nor do we see them when they are too rapid; so also with sound, when very low in pitch we do not hear it, when very high we do not hear it either. Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance . . . We must first care to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. Then having the power if we renounce it and do not resist we are doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist and yet at the same time make it appear and ourselves believe that we are actuated by motives of highest love, we shall be doing the exact opposite of what is morally good. Arjuna became coward at the sight of the mighty array against him, his “love” made him forget his duty towards his Country and King. That is why Shri Krishna told him that he was a hypocrite: ‘Thou talkest like a wise man, but the actions betray thee to be a coward, therefore stand up and fight.’” I want to add nothing more except a few questions. Do you

think that your so-called heart and soul non-violent disciples can resist this alien bureaucrat government by physical force? If yes, on what ground; if not how then does your non-violence remain the weapon of the strong? Please answer these questions in the most unmistakable terms so that no one can make different interpretations.

"Along with it I shall ask you the following questions which directly arise from your statement. In your Swarajya is there any place for soldiers? Will your Swarajya government keep armies? If so will they fight—I mean use physical force, when necessary, or will they offer Satyagraha against their opponents?"

I have room in my philosophy of life for *Kshatriyas*. But my definition of him I take from the *Gita*, He who does not run away from battle, *i.e.* danger, is a *Kshatriya*. As the world progresses the same terms acquire new values. Manu and the other lawgivers did not lay down eternal principles of conduct. They enunciated certain eternal maxims of life and laid down for their age rules of conduct more or less in accord with those maxims. I am unable to subscribe to the methods of bribery and deceit even for gaining entrance into heaven much less for gaining India's freedom. For heaven will not be heaven and freedom will not be freedom if either is gained through such methods.

I have not verified the quotation said to be from Vivekanand. It has neither the freshness nor the brevity that mark most of that great man's writings. But whether it is from his writings or not, it does not satisfy me. If a large number of the people carry out the doctrine of non-resistance, the present state of the world will not be what it is. Those individuals who have carried it out have not lost anything. They have not been butchered by the violent and the wicked. On the contrary the latter have shed both their violence and wickedness in the presence of the non-violent and the good.

I have already stated my meaning of the *Gita*. It deals with the eternal duel between good and evil. And who does

not, like Arjuna, often quail when the dividing line between good and evil is thin and when the right choice is so difficult?

I heartily endorse, however, the statement that he alone is truly non-violent who remains non-violent even though he has the ability to strike. I do therefore claim that my disciple (I have only one and that is myself) is quite capable of striking, very indifferently and perhaps ineffectively I admit; but he has no desire to do so. I have had in my life many an opportunity of shooting my opponents and earning the crown of martyrdom but I had not the heart to shoot any of them. For I did not want them to shoot me, however, much they disliked my methods. I wanted them to convince me of my error as I was trying to convince them of theirs. 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.' .

Alas! In my Swaraj of today there is room for soldiers. Let the revolutionary friend know that I have described the disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole people as the blackest crime of the British. I have not the capacity for preaching universal non-violence to the country. I preach therefore non-violence restricted strictly to the purpose of winning our freedom and therefore perhaps for preaching the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. But my incapacity must not be mistaken for that of the doctrine of non-violence. I see it with my intellect in all its effulgence. My heart grasps it. But I have not yet the attainments for preaching universal non-violence with effect. I am not advanced enough for the great task. I have yet anger within me, I have yet the *Dwaita Bhava*—quality in me. I can regulate my passions, I keep them under subjection, but before I can preach universal non-violence with effect, I must be wholly free from passions. I must be wholly incapable of sin. Let the revolutionary pray with and for me that I may soon become that. But meanwhile let him take with me the one step to it which I see as clearly as day light, i. e. to win India's freedom with strictly non-violent means. And then under Swaraj you and I shall have a disciplined intelligent educated police force

that would keep order within and fight raiders from without if by that time I or some one else does not show a better way of dealing with either.

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*21st May, 1925*

‘ON THE VERGE OF IT’

BY M. K. GANDHI

After putting the questions he has, a correspondent thus concludes his letter :

“I hope you will be courteous enough to throw light on these points and continue to discuss with me until I do not talk nonsense. I am your follower and have gone to jail under your leadership and guidance. I have never gone to see and talk to you even when I was very near to you and had ample opportunity, simply because I hated to encroach upon your time. I have not even touched your feet. I now feel very much shaken in my faith in your reasoning and politics. I am not a revolutionary, but I am on the verge of being a revolutionary. If you answer these questions satisfactorily you may save me.”

I now take his questions seriatim.

1. What is non-violence, an attitude of the mind or non-destruction of life? If it be the latter, is it possible to translate it into practice and carry it to its logical consequences when we destroy numberless lives daily in taking our meals etc.? We cannot even eat vegetables in that case.

Non-violence is both an attitude of mind and action consequent upon it. No doubt, there is life in vegetables. But the taking of vegetable life is inevitable. It is none the less destruction of life. Only it may be regarded as excusable.

The second question is :

2. If we cannot avoid destroying life, it certainly does not

mean that we should recklessly destroy it; but then, in proved cases of necessity it cannot be objected to on principle. It may be objected to on expediency.

Even in proved cases of necessity violence cannot be defended 'on principle.' It may be defended on grounds of expedience.

The third question is :

3. If non-violence is non-destruction of life, how can you consistently ask anybody to give up his own life in a cause howsoever holy and righteous it may be? Would that not be violence to one's own self?

I can consistently ask a person to give up his life for a cause and yet not be guilty of violence. For non-violence means refraining from injury to others.

The fourth is :

4. It is human nature to love one's own life. If one should sacrifice one's life when necessary for his country and people, why should he not sacrifice the lives of others when necessary? We have only to prove whether it was necessary. It is, therefore, a matter of expediency again.

'He that shall love his own life shall lose it. He that shall lose his own life shall find it.' Sacrifice of the lives of others cannot be justified on grounds of necessity, for it is impossible to prove necessity. We may not be judges ourselves. The sole judge must be those whose lives we would take. One good reason for non-violence is our fallible judgment. The inquisitors implicitly believed in the righteousness of their deeds, but we now know that they were wholly wrong.

The fifth question is :

5. What is the difference between sacrifice and murder?

Sacrifice consists in suffering in one's own person so that others may benefit. Murder consists in making others suffer unto death so that the murderer, or those others for whom he murders, may benefit.

The sixth question is :

6. Is a doctor, who operates upon you, condemnable for he is violent in giving you trouble temporarily? Do we not praise

him all the more for that,—looking not to his violent action but to his attitude of mind which is to give relief to the patient?

This is a misuse of the word violence which means causing injury to another without his consent or without doing any good to him. In my case the surgeon caused me temporary pain with my written and willing consent and for my sole good. A revolutionary murders or robs not for the good of his victims, whom he often considers to be fit only to be injured, but for the supposed good of society.

His seventh question is :

7. Is not physical force as much a potent factor of life as any other force? As non-violence can be taken by cowards as a garb to cover their cowardice, so can violence be misused by brutes and tyrants. It does not prove that violence of itself is bad.

Physical force undoubtedly is a potent factor of life. Violence has certainly been misused by tyrants, but in the sense in which I have defined violence, its good use is inconceivable. See the definition in the answer to the preceding question.

The eighth question is :

8. You will put lunatics and dangerous criminals who are a nuisance to society in prisons. Will you allow us to capture those civilised criminals, who are functioning as government officials today, and deport or imprison them in some Himalayan caves instead of murdering them?

I am not sure that it is right to put lunatics or criminals, dangerous or otherwise, in prison i. e. for punishment. Lunatics are not so put even now. And we are reaching a time when even criminals will be put under restraint for their ultimate reform, not for their punishment. But I would gladly join any society for the confinement, under proper safeguards for their comfort, of the viceroy and every civilian, English or Indian, who are today consciously or unconsciously bleeding India, provided that a scheme can be produced before me that is perfectly feasible from every point of view. And I would be prepared to



join such a society even though it may be argued that such confinement might fall within my definition of violence.

The ninth question is :

9. What is more inhuman and terrible, rather what is more violent, to let 33 millions suffer, stagnate and perish, or a few thousand be killed? What would you prefer to see the slow death of a mass of 33 millions through sheer degeneration, or killing of a few hundred of people? This certainly is to be proved that the killing of a few hundred will stop the degeneration of 33 millions. But then, it is a matter of detail and not principle. It may be later on discussed whether it is expedient or not. But if it is proved that by killing a few hundred, we can put a stop to the degeneration of 33 millions, will you object to violence on principle?

There is no principle worth the name if it is not wholly good. I swear by non-violence because I know that it alone conduces to the highest good of mankind, not merely in the next world but in this also. I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. I do not believe that the killing of even every Englishman can do the slightest good to India. The millions will be just as badly off as they are today, if some one made it possible to kill off every Englishman to-morrow. The responsibility is more ours than that of the English for the present state of things. The English will be powerless to do evil if we will but do good. Hence my incessant emphasis on reform from within.

But before the revolutionary I have urged non-violence not on the highest ground of morality but on the lower ground of expedience. I contend that the revolutionary method cannot succeed in India. If an open warfare were a possibility, I may concede that we may tread the path of violence that the other countries have and at least evolve the qualities that bravery on the battlefield brings forth. But attainment of Swaraj through warfare I hold to be an impossibility for any time that we can foresee. Warfare may give us another rule for the English rule but not self-rule in terms of the masses. The pilgrimage to

Swaraj is a painful climb. It requires attention to details. It means vast organising ability, it means penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words it means national education i. e. education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician's mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banian tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick. Haste here is most certainly waste. The revolution of the spinning wheel is the quickest revolution conceivable.

The tenth and the last question is :

10. Is not all logic and reason discarded where vital interests of life are concerned? Is it not a fact that a few selfish, tyrant and obdurate men may, as they do, refuse to listen to reason and continue to rule, tyrannise and do injustice to a mass of people? Lord Krishna failed to bring about a settlement peacefully between the obdurate Kauravas and Pandavas. Mahabharata may be a fiction. Poor Krishna may be less spiritual. But even you failed to persuade your judge to resign from his post and not convict you, whom even he, as everybody else, regarded innocent. How far can persuasion through self-sacrifice be successful in such cases?

It is sad but true that where so called vital interests are concerned logic and reason are thrown to the wind. Tyrants are, indeed, obdurate. The English tyrant is obduracy personified. But he is a multi-headed monster. He refuses to be killed. He cannot be paid in his own coin, for he has left none for us to pay him with. I have a coin that is not cast in his mint and he cannot steal it. It is superior to any he has yet produced. It is Non-violence; and the symbol of it is the spinning wheel. I have, therefore, presented it to the country with the fullest confidence. Krishna failed to do nothing he wished to do, so says the author of the Mahabharata. He was omnipotent. It is futile to drag Krishna from His heights. If He has to be judged as a mere mortal, I fear He will fare badly and will have to take a back seat. Mahabharata is neither fiction nor history

commonly so-called. It is the history of the human soul in which God as Krishna is the chief actor. There are many things in that poem that my poor understanding cannot fathom. There are in it many things which are obvious interpolations. It is not a treasure chest. It is a mine which needs to be explored, which needs to be dug deep and from which diamonds have to be extracted after removing much foreign matter. Therefore, I would urge my friends the full-fledged revolutionaries, or those in the making, or on the verge of being such, to keep their feet firm on mother earth and not scale the Himalayan heights to which the poet took Arjuna and his other heroes. Any way, I must respectfully refuse even to attempt the ascent. The plains of Hindustan are good enough for me.

To descend to the plains then, let the questioner understand that I had not gone to the court to persuade the judge of my innocence. But on the contrary, I went there to plead fully guilty and ask for the highest penalty. For the breach by me of the man-made law was deliberate. The judge did not, could not, believe me to be innocent. There was not much sacrifice in undergoing the imprisonment. True sacrifice is made of sterner stuff. Let my friend understand the implications of non-violence. It is a process of conversion, I am convinced. I must be pardoned for saying it that my out and out non-violence has converted many more Englishmen than any amount of threats or deeds of violence. I know that when conscious non-violence becomes general in India, Swaraj will not be far.

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24th September, 1925

### VIOLENCE IN AGRICULTURE?

BY M. K. GANDHI

A constant reader of *Navajivan* asks :

‘I have read in *Navajivan* that agriculture is pure *Yagna* (sacrifice), true service of man.

One is pained if he even by mistake treads down a little ant. But what of the agriculturist who witnesses thousands of such creatures being killed in the process of agricultural operations? Is it not that a daily repetition of these operations makes him callous? How can one who cannot bear seeming even an ant being destroyed engage himself in agriculture which by its very nature involves so much violence? Should not he rather support himself by begging or some other occupation? But begging is a most detestable occupation, I know. I would love very much to take up agriculture, but the violence involved and the spiked goads that are used for driving bullocks scare me away."

Agriculture does not indeed involve destruction of innumerable little creatures. But even so the process of life *i. e.* breathing—involves an equal amount of destruction. But just as you do not destroy the body by committing suicide, even so by running away from agriculture you cannot destroy agriculture. Man is an image of earth, of earth is his body composed, and from the component parts of earth does it derive its sustenance. He who lives on alms to escape the evils attendant on agriculture is guilty of a double wrong. He makes himself guilty of the violence involved in agriculture, because the food begged is the product of some one's agricultural labour. And the second wrong is that of ignorance and the consequent idleness of the man who lives on alms.

If agriculture is a forbidden occupation for one, it is not the less so for others. If many live on alms, a few agriculturists would have to groan under the burden of labouring for the bread of these many. Would not they be guilty of that sin?

The violence involved in agriculture and such other necessary occupation is as inevitable as that involved in the maintenance of the body. It does not cease to be violence, but being inevitable it involves less guilt, and man can absolve himself, from this guilt by *Gnana* (knowledge), *Bhakti* (devotion) and other spiritual means, and ultimately attain *Moksha*.

That is how the body is for man at once a means of bondage and emancipation. In the same way he who engages himself in agriculture with the object of becoming a millionaire turns agriculture into an instrument of bondage. He, who does so for bare maintenance, converts it into an instrument of emancipation. All *Karma*, all activity, all occupation involves violence in some form or other. All necessary occupations involve same amount of violence. Pearl fishing, silk manufacture, gold manufacture involve more violence than agriculture, in as much as they are not occupations necessary for life. The heart bows in reverence to the sage who evolved the religion of *Ahimsa* out of the surrounding mass of chaotic *Himsa*.

Of course it is a primary duty to go about without hurting even an ant. A man who proudly struts about regardless of the numerous insects and living things that he treads upon, deliberately commits sin and chooses the pathway to perdition. He cannot at all be placed side by side with the comparatively innocent agriculturist. Hundreds of such agriculturists save ants and other creatures with scrupulous care that come in their way. There is no arrogance about them. They are humble. They are the salt of the earth. Nine tenths of the world's population are engaged in agriculture. It blesses the earth and is therefore a pure and necessary sacrifice. Anyone, therefore, who is virtuously inclined may engage himself in this occupation renouncing all the unnecessary ones and thus earn merit for himself.

The objection about spiked goads does not apply to all agriculturists. Many treat their animals as members of their own family and bestow on them the same care and affection that they do on their children.

12th November, 1925

## THE MEANING OF THE GITA

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend puts forward the following poser :

"The controversy about the teaching of the Gita—whether it is *Himsa* (violence) or *Ahimsa* (Non-violence) will it seems go on for a long time. It is one thing what meaning we read in the Gita, or rather we want to read in the Gita ; it is another what meaning is furnished by an unbiassed reading of it. The question therefore does not present much difficulty to one who implicitly accepts *Ahimsa* as the eternal principle of life. He will say that the Gita is acceptable to him only if it teaches *Ahimsa*. A grand book like the Gita could, for him, inculcate nothing grander than the eternal religious principle of *Ahimsa*. If it did not it would cease to be his unerring guide. It would still be worthy of his high regard, but not an infallible authority.

"In the first chapter we find Arjuna laying down his weapons, under the influence of *Ahimsa*, and ready to die at the hands of the Kauravas. He conjures up a vision of the disaster and the sin involved in *Himsa*. He is overcome with ennui and in fear and trembling exclaims :

'Oh what a mighty sin we are up to !'

"Shri Krishna catches him in that mood and tells him : 'Enough of this high philosophy ; No one kills or is killed. The soul is immortal and the body must perish. Fight then the fight that has come to thee as a matter of duty. Victory or defeat is no concern of thine. Acquit thyself of thy task.'

"In the eleventh chapter the Lord presents a panoramic vision of the Universe and says :

'I am *kala*, the Destroyer of the worlds, the Ancient of Days ; I am here engaged in my task of destruction of the worlds. Kill thou those already killed by me. Give not thyself up to grief.'

"*Himsa* and *Ahimsa* are equal before God. But for man

what is God's message? Is it this: 'Fight; for thou art sure to foil thy enemies in the field'? If the Gita teaches *Ahimsa* the first and the eleventh chapters are not consistent with the rest, at any rate do not support the *Ahimsa* theory. I wish you could find time to resolve my doubt."

The question put is eternal and every one who has studied the Gita must needs find out his own solution. And although I am going to offer mine, I know that ultimately one is guided not by the intellect but by the heart. The heart accepts a conclusion for which the intellect subsequently finds the reasoning. Argument follows conviction. Man often finds reason in support of whatever he does or wants to do.

I shall therefore appreciate the position of those who are unable to accept my interpretation of the Gita. All I need do is to indicate how I reached my meaning, and what canons of interpretation I have followed in arriving at it. Mine is but to fight for my meaning, no matter whether I win or lose.

My first acquaintance with the Gita was in 1889, when I was almost twenty. I had not then much of an inkling of the principle of *Ahimsa*. One of the lines of the Gujarati poet Shamal Bhatta had taught me the principle of winning even the enemy with love, and that teaching had gone deep into me. But I had not deduced the eternal principle of Non-violence from it. It did not for instance cover all animal life. I had before this tasted meat whilst in India. I thought it a duty to kill venomous reptiles like the snake. It is my conviction today that even venomous creatures may not be killed by a believer in *Ahimsa*. I believed in those days in preparing ourselves for a fight with the English. I often repeated a Gujarati poet's famous doggerel: 'What wonder if Britain rules!' etc, My meat-eating was as a first step to qualify myself for the fight with the English. Such was my position before I proceeded to England, and there I escaped meat-eating etc., because of my determination to follow unto death the promises I had given to my mother. My love for truth has saved me from many a pit-fall.

Now whilst in England my contact with two English friends made me read the Gita. I say 'made me read,' because it was not of my own desire that I read it. But when these two friends asked me to read the Gita with them, I was ashamed of my ignorance. The knowledge of my total ignorance of my scriptures pained me. Pride I think was at the bottom of this feeling. My knowledge of Sanskrit was not enough to enable me to understand all the verses of the Gita unaided. The friends of course were quite innocent of Sanskrit. They placed before me Sir Edwin Arnold's magnificent rendering of the Gita. I devoured the contents from cover to cover and was entranced by it. The last nineteen verses of the second chapter have since been inscribed on the tablet of my heart. They contain for me all knowledge. The truths they teach are the 'eternal verities'. There is reasoning in them but they represent realised knowledge.

I have since read many translations and many commentaries, have argued and reasoned to my heart's content but the impression that the first reading gave me has never been effaced. Those verses are the key to the interpretation of the Gita. I would even advise rejection of the verses that may seem to be in conflict with them. But a humble student need reject nothing. He will simply say: 'It is the limitation of my own intellect that I cannot resolve this inconsistency. I might be able to do so in the time to come.' That is how he will plead with himself and with others.

A prayerful study and experience are essential for a correct interpretation of the scriptures. The injunction that a *Shudra* may not study the scriptures is not entirely without meaning. A *Shudra* means a spiritually uncultured, ignorant man. He is more likely than not to misinterpret the *Vedas* and other scriptures. Every one cannot solve an algebraical equation. Some preliminary study is a *sine qua non*. How ill would the grand truth 'I am Brahman' lie in the mouth of a man steeped in sin! To what ignoble purposes would he turn it! What a distortion it would suffer at his hands!



A man therefore who would interpret the scriptures must have the spiritual discipline. He must practise the *Yamas* and *Niyamas*—the eternal guides of conduct. A superficial practice thereof is useless. The Shastras have enjoined the necessity of a *Guru*. But a *Guru* being rare in these days, a study of modern books inculcating *Bhakti* has been suggested by the sages. Those who are lacking in *Bhakti*, lacking in faith, are ill qualified to interpret the scriptures. The learned may draw an elaborately learned interpretation out of them, but that will not be the true interpretation. Only the experienced will arrive at the true interpretation of the scriptures.

But even for the inexperienced there are certain canons. That interpretation is not true which conflicts with Truth. To one who doubts even Truth, the scriptures have no meaning. No one can contend with him. There is danger for the man who has failed to find *Ahimsa* in the scriptures, but he is not doomed. Truth—*Sat*—is positive; Non-violence is negative. Truth stands for the fact, Non-violence negatives the fact. And yet Non-violence is the highest religion. Truth is self-evident; Non-violence is its maturest fruit. It is contained in Truth, but as it is not self-evident a man may seek to interpret the Shastras without accepting it. But his acceptance of Truth is sure to lead him to the acceptance of Non-violence.

Renunciation of the flesh is essential for realising Truth. The sage who realised Truth found Non-violence out of the violence raging all about him and said: 'Violence is unreal, Non-violence is real. Realisation of Truth is impossible without Non-violence. Brahmacharya (celibacy), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Aparigraha* (non-possession) are means to achieve *Ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is the soul of truth. Man is mere animal without it. A seeker after Truth will realise all this in his search for Truth and he will then have no difficulty in the interpretation of the Shastras.

Another canon of interpretation is to scan not the letter but to examine the spirit. Tulsidas' Ramayana is a noble

book because it is informed with the spirit of purity, pity and piety. There is a verse in it which brackets drums, shudras, fools and women together as fit to be beaten. A man who cites that verse to beat his wife is doomed to perdition. Rama did not only not beat his wife, but never even sought to displease her. Tulsidas simply inserted in his poem a proverb current in his days, little dreaming that there would be brutes justifying beating of their wives on the authority of the verse. But assuming that Tulsidas himself followed a custom which was prevalent in his days and beat his wife, what then? The beating was still wrong. But the Ramayana was not written to justify beating of their wives by their husbands. It was written to depict Rama, the perfect man, and Sita the ideal wife, and Bharat the ideal of a devoted brother. Any justification incidentally met with therein of vicious customs should therefore be rejected. Tulsidas did not write his priceless epic to teach geography, and any wrong geography that we happen to come across in Ramayana should be summarily rejected.

Let us examine the Gita in the light of these observations. Self-realisation and its means is the theme of the Gita, the fight between two armies being but the occasion to expound the theme. You might if you like say that the poet himself was not against war or violence and hence he did not hesitate to press the occasion of a war into service. But a reading of the Mahabharata has given me an altogether different impression. The poet Vyasa has demonstrated the futility of war by means of that epic of wonderful beauty. What, he asks, if the Kauravas were vanquished? And what if the Pandavas won? How many were left of the victors and what was their lot? What an end Mother Kunti came to? And where are the Yadavas to-day?

Where the description of the fight and justification of violence are not the subject-matter of the epic, it is quite wrong to emphasise those aspects. And if it is difficult to reconcile certain verses with the teaching of Non-violence, it is far more

difficult to set the whole of the Gita in the framework of violence.

The poet when he writes is not conscious of all the interpretations his composition is capable of. The beauty of poetry is that the creation transcends the poet. The Truth that he reaches in the highest flights of his fancy is often not to be met with in his life. The life story of many a poet thus belies his poetry. That the central teaching of the Gita is not *Himsa* but *Ahimsa* is amply demonstrated by the subject begun in the second chapter and summarised in the concluding 18th chapter. The treatment in the other chapters also supports the position. *Himsa* is impossible without anger, without attachment, without hatred, and the Gita strives to carry us to the state beyond *Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, a state that excludes anger, hatred etc. But I can even now picture to my mind Arjuna's eyes red with anger everytime he drew the bow to the end of his ear.

It was not in a spirit of *Ahimsa* that Arjuna refused to go to battle. He had fought many a battle before. Only this time he was overcome with false pity. He fought shy of killing his own kith and kin. Arjuna never discussed the problem of killing as such. He did not say he would kill no one, even if he regarded him as wicked. Sri Krishna knows everyone's innermost thoughts and he saw through the temporary infatuation of Arjuna. He therefore told him: 'Thou hast already done the killing. Thou canst not all at once argue thyself into Non-violence. Finish what thou hast already begun.' If a passenger going in a Scotch Express gets suddenly sick of travelling and jumps out of it, he is guilty of suicide. He has not learnt the futility of travelling or travelling by a railway train. Similar was the case with Arjuna. Non-violent Krishna could give Arjuna no other advice. But to say that the Gita teaches violence or justifies war, because advice to kill was given on a particular occasion, is as wrong as to say that *Himsa* is the law of life, because a certain amount of it is inevitable in daily life. To one who

reads the spirit of the Gita, it teaches the secret of Non-violence, the secret of realising the self through the physical body.

And who are Dhritarashtra and Yudhishtira and Arjuna? Who is Krishna? Were they all historical characters? And does the Gita describe them as such? Is it true that Arjuna suddenly stops in the midst of the fight and puts the question to Krishna, and Krishna repeats the whole of the Gita before him? And which is that Gita—the Gita that Arjuna forgot after having exclaimed that his infatuation was gone and which he requested Krishna to sing again, but which he could not, and which therefore he gave in the form of *Anugita*?

I regard Duryodhana and his party as the baser impulses in man, and Arjuna and his party as the higher impulses. The field of battle is our own body. An eternal battle is going on between the two camps and the poet seer has vividly described it. Krishna is the Dweller within, ever whispering in a pure heart. Like the watch the heart needs the winding of purity, or the Dweller ceases to speak.

Not that actual physical battle is out of the question. To those who are innocent of Non-violence, the Gita does not teach a lesson of despair. He who fears, who saves his skin, who yields to his passions, must fight the physical battle whether he will or no; but that is not his *Dharma*. *Dharma* is one and one only. *Ahimsa* means *Moksha*, and *Moksha* is the realisation of Truth. There is no room here for cowardice. *Himsa* will go on eternally in this strange world. The Gita shows the way out of it. But it also shows that escape out of cowardice and despair is not the way. Better far than cowardice is killing and being killed in battle.

If the meaning of the verses quoted by the correspondent is not still clear, I must confess my inability to make it so. Is it agreed that the Almighty God is the Creator, Protector and Destroyer and ought to be such? And if He creates, He has undoubtedly the right to destroy. And yet He does not destroy because He does not create. His law is that whatever is born

must die, and in that lies His mercy. His laws are immutable. Where should we all be if He changed them capriciously?

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19th November, 1925.

‘LOW MORAL TONE’?

A Correspondent writes:

“I am myself a Hindu and belong to the highest Brahmin class. But I belong to the advanced party. I believe in Reason, for Reason is God and God is Reason. The philosophy of the Hindus which emphasizes the *So-ham*—I am He—doctrine has to-day built up a barrier which is more impenetrable than the Mt. Everest. The religion that built up its shrine on Mind-Purity is so obscured by the weed growths of ritualism that the real light is hidden from view. The culture that emphasized ‘Universal brotherhood under the fatherhood of God’ stands to-day for the treading of the millions by Brahma’s off-springs who have nothing in common but the archaic mythological derivation from the common stock. The *Ahimsa* doctrine has made us sneaking, snivelling cowards. A Hindu never plays fair with a Hindu; a Mohammedan plays fair with a Mohammedan and so does a Christian with a Christian. A Hindu is more tolerant of other customs outside the Hindu fold—another instance of downright cowardice—a Mohammedan is never tolerant and a Christian seldom. Shall educated Hindus continue this game of humbuggism or by taking up arms end it?”

I can throw little light on what the correspondent says but I can advise? Reform must begin with ourselves. ‘Physician heal thyself’ is a sound doctrine. Those who realise the lowness of the moral tone and the presence of cowardice among Hindus may at least begin with themselves. The truth of the charge may be generally admitted though not without reservations. But will resort to arms end the evil? How is the low

moral tone to be remedied by the brandishing of the sword? Can the innumerable sub-castes or untouchability or the often meaningless ritual be removed by force? Will it not be introducing religion by compulsion? If God is Reason, then the appeal must be not to the sword but to reason.

Or does the writer refer to the Hindu-Muslim tension and want the Hindus to resort to force of arms? On a close examination it will be discovered that in a vast majority of cases resort to arms is not only not necessary but harmful. What is wanted is the art of suffering. I hold that it is not *Ahimsa* that has made of us cowards but the loss of it. Surely it is not *Ahimsa* that makes us wish ill to people that oppose us but our utter ignorance of it. Those who do not take up arms refrain not because they are deterred by any notion of *Ahimsa* but because they are afraid to die. I have often wished that those who have no scruples about arms will dare to take them up. Then shall we be free of the burden of so-called *Ahimsaists* who being afraid of injury seek to cover their cowardice under the name of *Ahimsa* and corrupt the greatest truth of life. The same may be said of *So-ham*. It is a scientific truth which we belie in our treatment of the untouchables. The charges recited in the last paragraph cannot be sustained. What is true of Hindus is also largely true of the other sects. Human nature works in the same manner in the same circumstances. Is a Mussalman never tolerant? I see hundreds in my peregrinations who are as tolerant as Hindus. I have seen Christians too not seldom but frequently tolerant. The writer will also find upon observation that those who are intolerant towards other sects are no less intolerant among themselves.

*24th June, 1926*

## SACRIFICE

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have before me several letters from young men complaining that they have so many family burdens that the poor salary they get from public work is totally inadequate for their wants. One therefore says he must give up public work and go to Europe by raising a loan or securing a gift and increase his earning capacity; another is in search of a paying job; yet another wants a capital to start a paying business. Everyone of these young men is a sound, honest and self-sacrificing worker. But a reaction has set in. Family requirements have increased. Khadi or national education does not satisfy them. They do not desire to be a burden upon public service by asking for an increase. But the logical outcome of this attitude of mind must mean, if it becomes at all general, either stoppage of the public service which depends upon the labours of such men and women, or a general indefinite increase which in its turn must bring about the same undesirable result.

It was because this process of multiplication of wants out of proportion to our surroundings was discovered to be going on with increasing velocity that non-co-operation was conceived. And thus conceived it was not non-co-operation with persons, but with an attitude that was responsible for the system which had seized us in its serpentine coil and which was reducing us to dust. The system had raised the standard of living among us, its creatures, wholly unwarranted by the general conditions of the country. And since India did not live upon exploitation of other peoples, the expansion of the middle class who were also the middle-men meant extinction of the lowest strata. Hence the smallest villages were dying out through sheer exhaustion. This was all plain to many of us in 1920. The arresting movement is yet in its infancy. Let us not hinder it by any hasty action.

This artificial increase in our wants has been felt more severely than it otherwise would have been, because of the persistence of the family system which the Western method is ill-designed to support. The joint system having become wooden, its evils have become accentuated, its sweet graces have disappeared. Thus evil has been added to evil.

Our self-sacrifice must therefore be in terms of the requirements of the country. The reforms required are more from within than from without. A perfect constitution super-imposed upon a rotten internal condition will be like a whited sepulchre.

The process of self-purification must therefore be completed. The spirit of self-sacrifice must be extended. Great as the sacrifice has been, it is nothing compared to the demands made upon us by the country. We dare not support able-bodied members of the family—men or women—who will not work. We may not contribute a single pice towards the expenses of conforming to meaningless or superstitious customs, such as caste-dinners, or towards forming expensive marriage connections. Every marriage and every death brings an unnecessary cruel burden upon the head of the family. We must refuse to regard such acts of self-denial as self-sacrifice. They are evils to be counteracted with courage and resolution.

There is too, for us, the inordinately expensive education. When it is difficult for millions even to make the two ends meet, when millions are dying of starvation, it is monstrous to think of giving our relatives a costly education. Expansion of the mind will come from hard experience, not necessarily in the college or the school-room. When some of us deny ourselves and ours the so-called higher education, we shall find the true means of giving and receiving a really high education. Is there not, may there not be, a way of each boy paying for his own education? There may be no such way. Whether there is or there is not such a way is irrelevant. But there is no doubt that when we deny ourselves the way of expensive education, seeing that aspiration after higher education is a laudable end, we shall



find out a way of fulfilling it more in accord with our surroundings. The golden rule to apply in all such cases is resolutely to refuse to have what millions cannot. This ability to refuse will not descend upon us all of a sudden. The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions, and the next immediate thing is to re-arrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality.

Without a large, very large, army of such self-sacrificing and determined workers, real progress of the masses, I hold, to be an impossibility. And without that progress, there is no such thing as Swaraj. Progress towards Swaraj will be in exact proportion to the increase in the number of workers who will dare to sacrifice their all for the cause of the poor.

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24th June, 1926

### WHAT IS NATURAL?

BY M. K. GANDHI

No word seems to be more abused today than the word 'natural'. For instance, a correspondent writes, 'as eating and drinking are natural to man, even so is anger.' Another seems to argue: 'The sexual function is as natural as the other functions of the body. Were it not so, God would not have endowed it to man. If it was not our duty to curse the wicked and to bless the good, why should we have been endowed with the faculty of cursing and blessing? May it not be our duty to develop all our faculties to perfection? And thus *Himsa* would appear to be as much one's *dharma* as *Ahimsa*. In short virtue and vice are figments of our imagination. Your *Ahimsa* is a sign of weakness, in as much as it expresses only one side of our nature. Rather than regard it as the highest religion, why should we not regard it as the highest irreligion? *Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah* was originally *Ahimsa Parmo Adharmah*—the negative prefix *a* (not) having some-how dropped out, or rubbed

out by some enemy of mankind. For on many occasions, *Ahimsa* can be demonstrated to be the highest irreligion.'

This is not one man's argument. I have boiled down and put together the arguments of many. The theory about the negative *a* in *Ahimsa* being dropped was propounded by an old barrister friend, and he did so in all seriousness. Indeed if we were to put man in the same category as the brute, many things could be proved to come under the description 'natural'. But if they belong to two different species, not everything that is natural to the brute is natural to man. 'Progress is man's distinction, man's alone, not beast's.' Man has discrimination and reason. Man does not live by bread alone, as the brute does. He uses his reason to worship God and to know Him, and regards the attainment of that knowledge as the *summum bonum* of life. The brute, if he can be said to worship God, does so involuntarily. The desire to worship God is inconceivable in the brute, while man can voluntarily worship even Satan. It must therefore be, and is, man's nature to know and find God. When he worships Satan, he acts contrary to his nature. Of course, I will not carry conviction to one who makes no distinction between man and the brute. To him virtue and vice are convertible terms. While to the man whose end and aim is realisation of God, even the functions of eating and drinking can be natural only within certain limits. For having knowledge of God as his end, he will not eat or drink for the sake of enjoyment, but solely for sustaining the body. Restraint and renunciation will therefore always be his watch-words even in respect of these functions.

And if it is man's nature to know and find God, sexual indulgence should be contrary to his nature, and complete renunciation of it will accord best with his mission. For realisation of God is impossible without complete renunciation of the sexual desire. It is not man's duty to develop *all* his faculties to perfection ; his duty is to develop all his God-ward faculties to perfection and to suppress completely those of a contrary tendency.

Any one blessed with choice or free will to accept and reject, cannot but distinguish between good and evil, virtue and vice. For these mean in other words nothing but things to be accepted and things to be rejected. Thus robbing some one of his property is a thing to be rejected, hence bad or sinful. We have within us both good and bad desires. It is our duty to cultivate the former and to suppress or eradicate the latter, and if we fail therein we should remain brutes though born men. Birth as a human being is therefore declared by all religions as a rare privilege—a state of probation. And Hinduism says that if we are weighed and found wanting we should have to be re-born as beasts.

The world is full of *Himsa* and Nature does appear to be 'red in tooth and claw'. But if we bear in mind that man is higher than the brute, then is man superior to that Nature. If man has a divine mission to fulfil, a mission that becomes him, it is that of *Ahimsa*. Standing as he does in the midst of *Himsa*, he can retire into the innermost depths of his heart and declare to the world around him that his mission in this world of *Himsa* is *Ahimsa*, and only to the extent that he practises it does he adorn his kind. Man's nature then is not *Himsa*, but *Ahimsa*, for he can speak from experience his innermost conviction that he is not the body but *Atman*, and that he may use the body only with a view to expressing the *Atman*, only with a view to self-realisation. And from that experience he evolves the ethics of subduing desire, anger, ignorance, malice and other passions, puts forth his best effort to achieve the end and finally attains complete success. Only when his efforts reach that consummation can he be said to have fulfilled himself, to have acted according to his nature. Conquest of one's passions therefore is not superhuman, but human, and observance of *Ahimsa* is heroism of the highest type, with no room therein for cowardice or weakness.

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8th July, 1926

MORE ANIMAL THAN HUMAN '

BY M. K. GANDHI

A medical correspondent referring to the article 'What is Natural?' in '*Young India*' of the 24th ultimo writes :—

"It is only in the mass that the people's instinct of violence is aroused. It is almost impossible to prevent the use of physical force under such circumstances and I wonder if it is altogether desirable to discourage it. It is positively against man's nature. Man is animal first and human afterwards. Just think of the ancestor of the Australian savage and his times when there was no art, no literature, no science, and when man was a hunter and communicated with his fellows by means of gestures. Our ethical code is a thin veneer and the passions of the brute are still lurking within us. It is not natural to man to find and know God, much less to worship him. In an individual naturally brought up, educated in an unbiassed and non-theological atmosphere, the idea of worshipping God will be quite unnatural. Millions of educated adults in the world never enter a church, mosque or temple. God-worship is an acquired habit. The question of virtue and vice has nothing to do with God. Morality arises from the necessities of group life, and it has its sanctions in the social needs of man rather than in a capricious divine will. Man is not made in the image of God; it is God who is made in the image of man. Your moral code would not be debased if you regarded the ape as your remote cousin. Eating, drinking, and sexual gratification are absolutely natural to man. There are limits of course, but they are perfectly physiological and partly conventional. How can you preach this doctrine of complete renunciation of sexual desire? Don't you think that we cannot possibly attain

complete renunciation of the desire except through an exhaustive fulfilment of it? You say, 'Man's nature is not *himsa* but *ahimsa*.' But even your own programme of the boycott of the British goods, if it had been successful, could have resulted in nothing but violence to the British workers. Starving a man is as much violence as hitting him with a *lathi*. Your soul force or love force is a figment of imagination. *Ahimsa* is the creed of civilisation but is not man's nature."

I have very much condensed the medical practitioner's letter. The confidence with which it is written takes one's breath away. And yet the correspondent, who appears to be a practitioner of long standing and who has an English degree, represents a large number of educated men. I must confess, however, that he does not convince me. Let us examine his arguments. He says that non-violence cannot be attained by the mass of people. And, yet, we find that the general work of mankind is being carried on from day to day by the mass of people acting in harmony as if by instinct. If they were instinctively violent, the world would end in no time. They remain peaceful naturally and without any police or other compulsion. It is when the mass mind is unnaturally influenced by wicked men, that the mass of mankind commit violence. But they forget it as quickly as they commit it, because, they return to their peaceful nature immediately the evil influence of the directing mind is removed.

Hitherto, one has been taught to believe that a species is recognised and differentiated from the rest by its special characteristics. Therefore, it would be wrong, I presume, to say that a horse is animal first and horse after. He shares something in common with the other animals, but, he dare not shed his horseliness and yet remain an animal. Having lost his special virtue, he loses also his general status. Similarly, if a man lost his status as man and began to grow a tail and walk on all fours, lost the use of his hands, and, more than that, lost the use of his reason, would he not lose with the loss of his

status as man his status also as animal? Neither the ox nor the ass, neither the sheep nor the goat will claim him as theirs. I would suggest to the medical friend that man can be classed as animal only so long as he retains his humanity.

Neither is there any force in referring me to the Australian savage. Even that Australian savage was fundamentally different from the brute, because the brute always will remain brute, whereas the savage has in him the capacity for developing to the fullest height attainable by man. We need not go to the Australian savage. Our Indian ancestors also were at one time, it will hardly be disputed, just as good and noble savages as the Australians. I entirely endorse the remark of the correspondent that even in our so-called civilised state, we are not far removed from savages. But he is willing to allow that at least we the civilised descendants of our savage ancestors may be differentiated from the brute creation. It is natural for the brute to be brutal. We would resent the adjective if it was applied to us.

The correspondent apologises for suggesting that I might regard myself as a 'remote cousin of the ape'. The truth is that my ethics not only permit me to claim but require me to own kinship with not merely the ape but the horse and the sheep, the lion and the leopard, the snake and the scorpion. Not so need these kinsfolk regard themselves. The hard ethics which rule my life, and I hold ought to rule that of every man and woman, imposes this unilateral obligation upon us. And it is so imposed because man alone is made in the image of God. That some of us do not recognise that status of ours, makes no difference, except that then we do not get the benefit of the status, even as a lion brought up in the company of sheep, may not know his own status and therefore does not receive its benefits; but it belongs to him, nevertheless, and, the moment he realises it, he begins to exercise his dominion over the sheep. But no sheep masquerading as a lion can ever attain the leonine status. And, to prove the proposition that man is made in the image of God, it is surely unnecessary.

to show that all men admittedly exhibit that image in their own persons. It is enough to show that one man at least has done so. And, will it be denied that the great religious teachers of mankind have exhibited the image of God in their own persons ?

But, of course, my correspondent even contends that it is not natural to man to find and know God and therefore he says 'man makes God in his own image.' All I can say is that the whole of the evidence hitherto produced by travellers controvert this astounding proposition. It is being more and more demonstrated that it is the worship of God, be it in the crudest manner possible, which distinguishes man from the brute. It is the possession of that additional quality which gives him such enormous hold upon God's creation. It is wholly irrelevant to show that millions of educated people never enter a church, mosque, or temple. Such entry is neither natural nor indispensable for the worship of God. Those even who bow their heads before stocks and stones, who believe in incarnations or ghosts, acknowledge a power above and beyond them. It is true that this form of worship is savage, very crude ; nevertheless, it is worship of God. Gold is still gold though in its crudest state. It merely awaits refinement to be treated as gold even by the ignorant. No amount of refinement will turn iron ore into gold. Refined worship is doubtless due to the effort of man. Crude worship is as old as Adam, and, as natural to him as eating and drinking, if not more natural. A man may live without eating for days on, and he does not live without worship for a single minute. He may not acknowledge the fact as many an ignorant man may not acknowledge the possession of lungs or the fact of the circulation of blood.

The correspondent puts sexual gratification on a level with eating and drinking. If he had read my article carefully he would have avoided the confusion of thought that one traces in the thing quoted by him. What I have said and repeat is that eating for pleasure, for the gratification of the palate, is not

natural to man. But eating to live is natural. And so is the sexual act, but not gratification, for the sake of perpetuation of the species. natural to man.

I fear, I shall preach to the end of my day complete renunciation of sexual desire. And this correspondent is the first medical man to tell me that such renunciation is not possible except through 'our exhaustive fulfilment of the sexual desire.' On the contrary, medical authorities tell me that 'an exhaustive fulfilment' leads not to renunciation but to ruinous imbecility. Complete renunciation of the desire no doubt requires an effort, but is it not worth the prize? If a lifetime may be devoted to the exploration of the properties of sound or light and heat, which after all only show us the phenomenal world to advantage, is it too much to expect an equal effort to attain complete renunciation which leads to self-realisation, or in other words, to a certain knowledge of God?

And one who is fairly on the road to renunciation will not need to be told that *ahimsa* (love), not *himsa* (hate) rules man, I was almost about to say, the world. Illustrations that the correspondent gives to prove my own *himsa* betrays his ignorance of my writings. The ignorance, of course, does not matter, because, no one need read '*Young India*'. But ignorance of a man's views is unpardonable when one ventures to criticise them. I have advocated boycott only of *foreign cloth* and there is no violence done to the British workers who may be thrown out of employment because of the boycott of cloth manufactured by them; for the simple reason that purchase of foreign cloth is not an obligation undertaken by India. Violence is all the other way. It is done to India in the name of and on behalf of British workers by imposing British cloth upon India. A drunkard does no violence to the owner of a drink-shop when he becomes a teetotaler. He serves both the publican and himself. And so will India serve both the foreigners and herself, when she ceases to buy foreign cloth. Foreign workmen will not starve but will find better employment. And if they will voluntarily give up manufacturing



cloth for India, they will have taken part in a great humanitarian movement.

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18th November, 1926.

### CONDITIONS OF PACIFIC STRIKE

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend sends me an extract from *No more War* an organ of the British Pacifists. I copy from the extract the following conditions Mr. A. Fenner Brockway lays down as a test of a pacific strike :

1 A strike in protest of social evils which destroy human life can be as much as an act of pacifism as a strike against war. (Starvation wages kill as many human beings as are killed by guns.)

2 If it be said that "constitutional" means could be used to end these evils, the same can be said of war. Our "constitutional" machinery is inadequate. The voters two years ago had neither wage reductions nor war in mind.

3 If it be said that a strike (and particularly a general strike) against wage reduction is an effort to "coerce" the nation or the Government, the same can be said about a general strike against war. As a matter of fact, neither has any promise of success unless the greater part of the nation supports it.

4. It is not accurate to liken a strike to an economic blockade. So far as there is danger of hunger, it would be the strikers themselves who would suffer first. In actual fact, in the recent General Strike the T. U. C. (Trade Union Congress) was prepared to co-operate in maintaining life and health. The Government refused co-operation.

5. *The determining factor as to whether a strike is pacifist or not* is the spirit from which it springs. A strike against war in which the motive was hatred of members of the

Government rather than of war and which represented a spirit which might be transformed to civil war, would not be an act of pacifism, nor would a strike against wage reductions animated by hatred of the employers or of members of the Government, or by anti-social feeling. But both are acts of pacifism when inspired by the spirit of protest against the evils themselves.

6. Whilst it is admitted that a non-pacifist spirit occasionally showed itself in the utterances, and still more rarely in the acts of strikers, I have not the least hesitation in saying that the dominant motive in the Great Strike was that of self-sacrificing moral protest and not anti-social force or personal hatred. It was this which gave it spiritual power; in this the secret of the wonderful self-discipline of the men was to be found.

A pacifism which can only see the cruelties of occasional military warfare and is blind to the continuous cruelties of our social system is worthless. Unless our pacifism finds expression in the broad human movement which is seeking not merely the end of war, but our equally non-pacifist civilisation as a whole it will be of little account in the inward march of mankind. The spirit of life will sweep on, quite uninfluenced by it.

The No More War Movement will fulfil its purpose just in so far as it recognises this".

I would only add to these admirable conditions one more test. A pacific strike must be limited to those who are labouring under the grievance to be redressed. Thus if the match manufacturers, say, of Timbuctoo, who are quite satisfied with their lot strike out of sympathy for its mill hands who are getting starvation wages, the match manufacturers' strike would be a species of violence. They may and should help in a most effective manner by withdrawing their custom from the mill owners of Timbuctoo without laying themselves open to the charge of violence. But it is possible to conceive occasions when those who are not directly suffering may be under an obligation to cease work. Thus if, in the instance imagined, the masters

in the match factory combine with the mill-owners of Timbuctoo, it will clearly be the duty of the workers in the match factory to make common cause with the mill-hands. But I have suggested the addition purely by way of illustration. In the last resort every case has to be judged on its own merits. Violence is a subtle force. It is not easy always to detect its presence though you may feel it all the same.

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9th December, 1926

## THE GREATEST GOOD OF ALL

BY M. K. GANDHI

A constant reader of *Young India* sends the following :

Here is news in a press-cutting of a year ago which would seem to support your view regarding the duty of taking life under certain circumstances, which you have been expounding in the series of articles under the caption 'Is this Humanity?', particularly in the fourth of the series published in *Young India* of November 4.

Special to *Times of India*

LITTLETON, (Colorado), Nov. 13 (1925).

Harold Blazer, a country doctor, aged 61, who chloroformed his daughter because he felt that his own end was near and there was no one to care for her when he was gone, was fully acquitted when the prosecution moved the dismissal of the case following the inability of the jury to agree after fourteen hours, at the end of which eleven were for an acquittal. Dr. Blazer's counsel, Mr. Howry, declared: 'Blazer did a right and moral thing by keeping the poor girl for whom he had cared for thirty-two years from becoming a charge on others. This imbecile girl, gargoyle, without arms, legs, speech or thought, whom it was necessary to feed with food already masticated, could not have a soul.'

"At about the same time last year I remember I read

about a Paris case in which an actress shot and killed her lover at his own importunate request, as he was suffering excruciating pain from a disease from which there was no hope of recovery. The actress was tried for manslaughter, but acquitted on the jury's verdict that no crime had been committed in view of the circumstances. Though there appears to be no law in France to justify such a verdict, I have read that in Denmark there has been actually a law passed making it no crime for certain authorised persons in cases like the above to put an end to a human life with 'happy dispatch.' I hope these cases may be of interest to you and many of my fellow readers of *Young India*."

I reproduce this letter for it helps me to elucidate my own position. If such a very careful reader of *Young India*, as I know this correspondent is, misunderstands my position as is evident from his letter, how many more occasional readers must have done likewise? Several readers did draw my attention to the danger of a misunderstanding arising owing to the traditional hardness of our hearts which makes us prone to seize every opportunity of doing violence. One can only be—one ought to be—most careful in the handling of delicate problems; but no fear of misuse of statements can be permitted to stop a free and honest discussion of fundamental truths. For me, I shall learn to be and do right only by prayerful discussion, elucidation and interchange of views. This letter I have quoted is an instance in point. The discussion has brought to light an honest misunderstanding of difference between the correspondent and myself in the interpretation of the same principle.

Whilst I am of opinion that Dr. Blazer was well acquitted, according to the test laid down by me, he was wrong in taking the life of his daughter. It betrayed want of faith in the humanity of those round him. There was no warrant for him to suppose that the daughter would not have been cared for by others. The position in the case of dogs under the circumstances assumed by me is materially different from the position in which Dr. Blazer found himself. Nor I am able to subscribe

to the view that an idiot has no soul. I believe that even the lower creation have souls.

Weightier still is the difficulty which another earnest reader puts and which may be thus summarised:

"I appreciate the position you have taken up. It is the only true position. But does not your argument after all resolve itself into the utilitarian doctrine of the greater good of the greater number? And if that is your position, wherein does the doctrine of non-violence differ from the utilitarian which makes no pretence to non-violence and which will not hesitate to destroy life if the destruction would lead to the greater good of the greater number?"

In the first place even though the outward act may be the same, its implications will vary according to the motive prompting it. Thus as non-violence in the West stops at man and, even then, only where possible, there is no compunction felt either over subjecting animals to vivisection for the supposed greater good of mankind or over heaping up most destructive armaments also in the name of the same doctrine of utility. A votary of non-violence, on the other hand, might have done one act of destruction in common with the utilitarian, but he would prefer to die rather than make himself party to vivisection or to an endless multiplication of armaments.

The fact is that a votary of *ahimsa* cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula. He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realise the ideal. He will therefore be willing to die so that the others may live. He will serve himself with the rest, by himself dying. The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greater number, and therefore he and the utilitarian will converge at many points in their career but there does come a time when they must part company, and even work in opposite directions. The utilitarian to be logical will never sacrifice himself. The absolutist will even sacrifice himself. The absolutist, when he kills a dog, does so either out of weakness or in rare cases for the sake of

the dog himself. That it is a dangerous thing to decide what is or is not good for the dog, and that he may therefore make grievous mistakes is irrelevant to the fact of the motive prompting the act. The absolutist's sphere of destruction will be always the narrowest possible. The utilitarian's has no limit. Judged by the standard of non-violence the late war was wholly wrong. Judged by the utilitarian standard each party has justified it according to its idea of utility. Even the Jallianwalla Bag massacre was justified by its perpetrators on the grounds of utility. And precisely on the same ground the anarchist justifies his assassinations. But none of these acts can possibly be justified on the greatest-good-of-all principle.

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*21st October, 1926*

## IS THIS HUMANITY?

BY M. K. GANDHI

### I

The Ahmedabad Humanitarian League has addressed me a letter from which I take the relevant portions :

"The talk of the whole city of Ahmedabad is the destruction of 60 dogs on his mill premises at the instance of Seth..... Many a humanitarian heart is considerably agitated over the incident. When Hinduism forbids the taking of the life of any living being, when it declares it to be a sin, do you think it right to kill rabid dogs for the reason that they would bite human beings and by biting other dogs make them also rabid? Are not the man who actually destroys the dogs as also the man at whose instance he does so both sinners?

"A deputation of three gentlemen from our Society waited on the Seth on the 28th ultimo. He confessed in the course of the interview, that he had to take the course in question to save human life. He also said : " I myself had

no sleep on the night I took that decision. I met Mahatmaji the next morning and ascertained his view in the matter. He said, 'What else could be done?' Is that a fact? And if so, what does it mean?

We hope you will express your views in the matter and set the whole controversy at rest and prevent humanitarianism from being endangered by the shocks given to it by distinguished men like the Seth. The Ahmedabad Municipality, we have heard, is soon going to have before it a resolution for the castration of stray dogs. Is it proper? Does religion sanction the castration of an animal? We should be thankful if you would give your opinion in this matter also."

Ahmedabad knows the name of the mill-owner, but as *Nava-jivan* is being read outside Ahmedabad also, I have omitted to mention his name in accordance with my practise to avoid personalities whilst discussing a principle. The question raised by the Humanitarian Society is an intricate one. I had been thinking of discussing the question ever since and even before the incident, but on second thought dropped the idea. But the letter of the Society now compels me, makes it my duty, to enter into a public discussion of the question.

I must say that my relations with the mill-owner have been sweet, and, if I may say so, friendly. He came to me and expressed his distress in having had to order destruction of the dogs, and asked my opinion about it. He also said: "When the Government, the Municipality and the Mahajan all alike failed to guide me I was driven to this course." I gave him the reply that the Society's letter attributes to me.

I have since thought over the matter and feel that my reply was quite proper.

Imperfect, erring, mortals as we are, there is no course open to us but the destruction of rabid dogs. At times we may be faced with the unavoidable duty of killing a man who is found in the act of killing people.

If we persist in keeping stray dogs undisturbed, we shall

soon be faced with the duty of either castrating them or killing them. A third alternative is that of having a special *panjrapole* for dogs. But it is out of the question. When we cannot cope with all the stray cattle in the city, the very proposal of having a *pinjrapole* for dogs seems to me to be chimerical.

There can be no two opinions on the fact that Hinduism regards killing a living being as sinful. I think all religions are agreed on the principle. There is generally no difficulty in determining a principle. The difficulty comes in when one proceeds to put it into practice. A principle is the expression of perfection, and as imperfect beings like us cannot practise perfection, we devise every moment limits of its compromise in practice. So Hinduism has laid down that killing for sacrifice is no *himsa* (violence). This is only a half-truth. Violence will be violence for all time, and all violence is sinful. But what is inevitable is not *regarded* as a sin, so much so that the science of daily practice has not only declared the inevitable violence involved in killing for sacrifice as permissible but even regarded it as meritorious.

But unavoidable violence cannot be defined. For it changes with time, place, and person. What is regarded excusable at one time may be inexcusable at another. The violence involved in burning fuel or coal in the depth of winter to keep the body warm may be unavoidable and therefore a duty, for a weak-bodied man, but fire unnecessarily lit in midsummer is clearly violence.

We recognise the duty of killing microbes by the use of disinfectants. It is violence and yet a duty. But why go even as far as that? The air in a dark closed room is full of little microbes, and the introduction of light and air into it by opening it is destruction indeed. But it is ever a duty to use that finest of disinfectants—pure air.

These instances can be multiplied. The principle that applies in the instances cited applies in the matter of killing rabid dogs. To destroy a rabid dog is to commit the minimum amount of violence. A recluse, who is living in a forest and is



compassion incarnate, may not destroy a rabid dog. For in his compassion he has the virtue of making it whole. But a city-dweller who is responsible for the protection of lives under his care and who does not possess the virtues of the recluse, but is capable of destroying a rabid dog, is faced with a conflict of duties. If he kills the dog he commits a sin. If he does not kill it, he commits a graver sin. So he prefers to commit the lesser one and save himself from the graver.

I believe myself to be saturated with *ahimsa*—Non-Violence. *Ahimsa* and Truth are as my two lungs. I cannot live without them. But I see every moment with more and more clearness, the immense power of *ahimsa* and the littleness of man. Even the forest dweller cannot be entirely free from violence, in spite of his limitless compassion. With every breath he commits a certain amount of violence. The body itself is a house of slaughter, and therefore *Moksha* and Eternal Bliss consist in perfect deliverance from the body, and therefore all pleasure, save the joy of *Moksha*, is evanescent, imperfect.

That being the case, we have to drink, in daily life, many a bitter draught of violence.

It is therefore a thousand pities that the question of stray dogs etc., assumes such a monstrous proportion in this sacred land of *himsa*. It is my firm conviction that we are propagating *himsa* in the name of *ahimsa* owing to our deep ignorance of the great principle. It may be a sin to destroy rabid dogs and such others as are liable to catch rabies. But we are responsible, the Mahajan is responsible, for this state of things. The Mahajan may not allow the dogs to stray. It is a sin, it should be a sin, to feed stray dogs, and we should save numerous dogs if we had legislation making every stray dog liable to be shot. Even if those who feed stray dogs consented to pay a penalty for their misdirected compassion we should be free from the curse of stray dogs.

Humanity is a noble attribute of the soul. It is not exhausted with saving a few fish or a few dogs. Such saving may even be sinful. If I have a swarm of ants in my house, the

man who proceeds to feed them will be guilty of a sin. For God has provided their grain for the ants, but the man who feeds them might destroy me and my family. The Mahajan may feel itself safe and believe that it has saved their lives by dumping dogs near my field, but it will have committed the greater sin of putting my life in danger. Humaneness is impossible without thought, discrimination, charity, fearlessness, humility and clear vision. It is no easy thing to walk on the sharp sword-edge of *ahimsa* in this world which is so full of *himsa*. Wealth does not help; anger is the enemy of *ahimsa*; and pride is a monster that swallows it up. In this strait and narrow observance of this religion of *ahimsa* one has often to know so-called *himsa* as the truest form of *ahimsa*.

Things in this world are not what they seem and do not seem as they really are. Or if they are seen as they are, they so appear only to a few who have perfected themselves after ages of penance. But none has yet been able to describe the reality, and no one can.

## II

When I wrote the article on this subject I knew that I was adding one more to my already heavy burden of troubles. But it could not be helped.

Angry letters are now pouring in. At an hour when after a hard day's work I was about to retire to bed, three friends invaded me, infringed the religion of *ahimsa* in the name of humanity, and engaged me in a discussion on it. They had come in the name of humanity. How could I refuse to see them?

So I met them. One of them, I saw, betrayed anger, bitterness and arrogance. He did not seem to me to have come with a view to getting his doubts solved. He had come rather to correct me. Everyone has a right to do so, but whoever undertakes such a mission must know my position. This friend had taken no trouble to understand my position. But he was not to blame for it. This impatience which is but a

symptom of violence is to be found everywhere. The violence in this case was painful to me as it was betrayed by an advocate of non-violence.

He claimed to be a Jain. I have made a fair study of Jainism. This visitor's *ahimsa* was a distortion of the reality as I have known it in Jainism. But the Jains have no monopoly of *ahimsa*. It is not the exclusive peculiarity of any religion. Every religion is based on *ahimsa*, its application is different in different religions.

I do not think that the Jains of today practice *ahimsa* in any better way than others. I can say this, because of my acquaintance with Jains, which is so old that many take me to be a Jain. Mahavir was an incarnation of compassion, of *ahimsa*. How I wish his votaries were votaries also of his *ahimsa*.

Protection of little creatures is indeed an essential part of *Ahimsa*, but it does not exhaust itself with it. *Ahimsa* begins with it. Besides protection may not always mean mere refraining from killing. Torture or participation, direct or indirect, in the unnecessary multiplication, of those that must die, is *himsa*.

The multiplication of dogs is unnecessary. A roving dog without an owner is a danger to society and a swarm of them is a menace to its very existence.

If we want to keep dogs in towns or villages in a decent manner, no dog should be suffered to wander. There should be no stray dogs even as we have no stray cattle. Humanitarian societies should find a religious solution of such questions.

But can we take individual charge of these roving dogs? And if we cannot, can we have a *panjrapole* for them? If both these things are impossible, there seems to me to be no alternative except to kill them.

Connivance or putting up with the *status quo* is no *ahimsa*, there is no thought or discrimination in it. Dogs will be killed whenever they are a menace to society. I regard this as unavoidable in the life of a householder. To wait until they

get rabid is not to be merciful to them. We can imagine what the dogs would wish if a meeting could be called of them, from what we would wish under the same circumstances. We will not choose to live anyhow. That many of us do so is no credit to us. A meeting of wise men will never resolve that men may treat one another as they treat rabid or stray dogs. What shall we expect of them, if there were to be some beings lording it over us as we do over dogs? Would we not rather prefer to be killed than to be treated as dogs? We offend against dogs as a class by suffering them to stray and live on crumbs or leavings from our plates that we throw at them, and we injure our neighbours also by doing so.

I admit that there is the duty of suffering dogs to live even at the cost of one's life. But that religion is not for the householder who desires to live, who procreates, who would protect society. The householder can but practise the middle path of taking care of a few dogs.

Our domestics of today are the wild animals of yesterday. The buffalo is a domestic only in India. It is a sin to domesticate wild animals inasmuch as man does so for his selfish purposes. That he has domesticated the cow and the buffalo is not out of mercy for them, it is for his own use. He therefore does not allow a cow or a buffalo to stray. The same duty is incumbent regarding dogs. I am therefore strongly of opinion that if we would practise the religion of humanity, we should have a law making it obligatory on those who would have dogs, to keep them under guard, and not allow them to stray, and making all the stray dogs liable to be destroyed after a certain date.

If the Mahajan has really any mercy for the dogs, it should take possession of all the stray dogs and distribute them to those who want to keep them. It seems to me to be impossible to protect dogs as we can protect the cows.

But there is a regular science of dog-keeping which the people in the West have formulated and perfected. We should learn it from them and devise measures for the solution of our

own problem. The work cannot be done without patience, wisdom and perseverance.

So much about dogs. But with *ahimsa* in its comprehensive aspect I propose to deal on another occasion.

### III

Whilst I admit the possibility of having made a mistake in giving the opinion that the destruction by Mr. Ambalal's order of those sixty dogs was unavoidable, I do not regret having expressed that opinion. The result so far is all to the good. We shall perhaps now understand more clearly our duty to such animals. Much wrong has been done partly out of ignorance, partly from hypocrisy and partly for fear of public opinion. All that should now cease.

But if the good is to be maintained, a clear understanding is necessary between the readers and myself. I have received quite a pile of letters on the subject, some friendly, some sharp and some bitter. They do not seem to have understood my attitude on the destruction of dogs by Mr. Ambalal. I have often had the misfortune to be misunderstood. In South Africa my life was in peril over an action which was quite consistent with my avowed principles but which, as was proved later, was rashly regarded as contrary to them. The so-called 'Himalayan blunder' of Bardoli is a recent memory. Bombay Government very kindly imprisoned me at Yeravada and saved me the trouble of much writing by way of explaining and clearing my position. The Bardoli decision, I still hold, was not wrong. It was, on the contrary, an act of purest *ahimsa* and of invaluable service to the country. I feel just as clear about my opinion regarding the present question. I hold that the opinion is perfectly in accord with my conception of *ahimsa*.

The critics, whether friendly or hostile, should bear with me. Some of the hostile critics have transgressed the limits of decorum. They have made no attempt to understand my position. It seems they cannot for a moment tolerate my opinion. Now they must be one of two things. They are either my teachers or they regard me as one. In the latter case, they

should be courteous and patient and should have faith in me and ponder over what I write. In the former case, they should be indulgent to me and try to reason with me as lovingly and patiently as they can. I teach the children under my care not by being angry with them but I teach them, if at all, by loving them, by allowing for their ignorance, and by playing with them. I expect the same love, the same consideration and the same sportsmanlike spirit from my angry teachers. I have given my opinion with regard to the dogs with the best of motives and as a matter of duty. If I am mistaken, let the critics who would teach me reason with me patiently and logically. Angry and irrelevant argument will not convince me.

A gentleman called on me the other evening at a late hour. He knew that my time was completely occupied. He engaged me in a discussion, used hard and bitter language, and poured vials of wrath on me. I answered his questions in good humour and politely. He has published the interview in a leaflet which he is selling. It is before me. It has crossed the limits of truth, obviously of decorum. He had neither obtained my permission to publish the interview nor showed it to me before publication. Does he seek to teach me in this manner? He who trifles with truth cuts at the root of *ahimsa*. He who is angry is guilty of *ahimsa*. How can such a man teach me *ahimsa*?

Even so the hostile critics are doing me a service. They teach me to examine myself. They afford me an opportunity to see if I am free from the reaction of anger. And when I go to the root of their anger, I find nothing but love. They have attributed to me *ahimsa* as they understand it. Now they find me acting in a contrary manner and are angry with me. They once regarded me as a *mahatma*, they were glad that my influence on the people was accordingly to their liking. Now I am an *alpatma* (a little soul) in their opinion; my influence on the people they now regard as unwholesome and they are pained by the discovery; and as they cannot control themselves, they turn the feeling of pain into one of anger.

I do not mind this outburst of anger, as I appreciate the motive behind it. I must try to reason with them patiently, and if they would help me in my attempt, I request them to calm their anger. I am a votary of truth and a seeker after it. If I am convinced that I am mistaken I shall admit my mistake (as I always love to do), and shall promptly mend it. It is the word of the Scriptures that the mistakes of a votary of truth never harm anybody. That is the glorious secret of truth.

Just a word to friendly critics: I have preserved your letters. I usually reply to my correspondents individually. But the number of letters I have received this time and have been still getting is so large and they are so inordinately long that I cannot possibly reply to them individually. I cannot, I fear, make time even to acknowledge them. Some of the correspondents ask me to publish their letters in *Navajivan*. I hope they will not press the request. I shall try to answer all the arguments that are relevant as well as I can and hope that, that will satisfy them.

I bespeak the indulgence of the reader for this necessary preface. I shall now take up some of the letters before me.

A friend says:

"You ask us not to feed stray dogs. But we do not invite them. They simply come. How can they be turned back? It will be time enough when there is a plethora of them. But is there any doubt that feeding dogs cultivates the impulse of compassion and turning them away hardens our hearts? We are all sinners. Why should we not practise what little kindness we can?"

It is from this false feeling of compassion that we encourage *himsa* in the name of *ahimsa*. But as ignorance is no excuse before man-made law, even so is it no excuse before the divine Law.

But let us analyse the argument. We cast a morsel at the beggar come to our door, and feel that we have earned some merit, but we really thereby add to the number of beggars, aggravate the evil of beggary, encourage idleness and conse-

quently promote irreligion. This does not mean that we should starve the really deserving beggars. It is the duty of society to support the blind and the infirm, but every one may not take the task upon himself. The head of the society *i.e.*, the Mahajan or the State where it is well-organised, should undertake the task, and the philanthropically inclined should subscribe funds to such an institution. If the Mahajan is pure-minded and wise it will carefully investigate the conditions of beggars and protect the deserving ones. When this does not happen *i.e.*, when relief is indiscriminate, scoundrels disguised as beggars get the benefit of it and the poverty of the land increases.

If it is thus a sin on the part of an individual to undertake feeding beggars, it is no less a sin for him to feed stray dogs. It is a false sense of compassion. It is an insult to the starving dog to throw a crumb at him. Roving dogs do not indicate the civilisation or compassion of the society, they betray on the contrary the ignorance and lethargy of its members. The lower animals are our brethren. I include among them the lion and the tiger. We do not know how to live with these carnivorous beasts and poisonous reptiles because of our ignorance. When man knows himself better he will learn to befriend even these. Today he does not even know how to befriend a man of a different religion or from a foreign country.

The dog is a faithful companion. There are numerous instances of the faithfulness of dogs and horses. But that means that we should keep them and treat them with respect as we do our companions and not allow them to roam about. By aggravating the evil of stray dogs we shall not be acquitting ourselves of our duty to them. But if we regard the existence of stray dogs as a shame to us, and therefore refuse to feed them, we shall be doing the dogs as a class a real service and make them happy.

What then can a humane man do for stray dogs? He should set apart a portion of his income and send it on to a society for the protection of those animals if there be one. If such a society is impossible—and I know it is very difficult



even if it is not impossible—he should try to own one or more dogs. If he cannot do so, he should give up worrying about the question of dogs and direct his humanity towards the service of other animals.

‘But you are asking us to destroy them?’ is the question angrily or lovingly asked by others. Now, I have not suggested the extirpation of dogs as an absolute duty. I have suggested the killing of some dogs as a ‘duty in distress’ and under certain circumstances. When the State does not care for stray dogs, nor does the Mahajan, and when one is not prepared to take care of them oneself, then, and if one regards them as a danger to society, he should kill them and relieve them from a lingering death. This is a bitter dose, I agree. But it is my innermost conviction that true love and compassion consist in taking it.

The dogs in India are today in as bad a plight as the decrepit animals and men in the land. It is my firm conviction that this sorry plight is due to our misconception of *ahimsa*, is due to our want of *ahimsa*. Practice of *ahimsa* cannot have as its result impotence, impoverishment and famine. If this is a sacred land we should not see impoverishment stalking it. From this state of things some rash and impatient souls have drawn the conclusion that *ahimsa* is irreligion. But I know that it is not *ahimsa* that is wrong, it is its votaries that are wrong.

*Ahimsa* is the religion of a Kshatriya. Mahavira was a Kshatriya, Buddha was a Kshatriya, Rama and Krishna were Kshatriyas and all of them were votaries of *ahimsa*. We want to propagate *ahimsa* in their name. But to-day *ahimsa* has become the monopoly of timid Vaishyas and that is why it has been besmirched. *Ahimsa* is the extreme limit of forgiveness. But forgiveness is the quality of the brave. *Ahimsa* is impossible without fearlessness.

Cows we cannot protect, dogs we kick about and belabour with sticks, their ribs are seen sticking out, and yet we are not ashamed of ourselves and raise a hue and cry when a stray dog

is killed. Which of the two is better—that five thousand dogs should wander about in semi-starvation, living on dirt and excreta and drag on a miserable existence, or that fifty should die and keep the rest in a decent condition? It is admittedly sinful always to be spurning and kicking the dogs. But it is possible that the man who kills the dogs that he cannot bear to see tortured thus, may be doing a meritorious act. Merely taking life is not always *himsa*, one may even say that there is sometimes more *himsa*, in not taking life. We must examine this position in another article.

## IV

Taking life may be a duty. Let us consider this position.

We do destroy as much life as we think is necessary for sustaining the body. Thus for food we take life, vegetable and other, and for health we destroy mosquitoes and the like by the use of disinfectants etc. and we do not think that we are guilty of irreligion in doing so.

This is as regards one's own self. But for the sake of others *i. e.*, for the benefit of the species we kill carnivorous beasts. When lions and tigers pester their villages, the villagers regard it a duty to kill them or have them killed.

Even manslaughter may be necessary in certain cases. Suppose a man runs amuck and goes furiously about sword in hand, and killing any one that comes his way, and no one dares to capture him alive. Any one who despatches this lunatic will earn the gratitude of the community and be regarded a benevolent man.

From the point of view of *ahimsa* it is the plain duty of every one to kill such a man. There is indeed one exception if it can be so-called. The yogi who can subdue the fury of this dangerous man may not kill him. But we are not here dealing with beings who have almost reached perfection; we are considering the duty of the society, of the ordinary erring human beings.

There may be a difference of opinion as regards the appositeness of my illustrations. But if they are inadequate,

others can be easily imagined. What they are meant to show is that refraining from taking life can in no circumstances be an absolute duty.

The fact is that *ahimsa* does not simply mean non-killing. *Himsa* means causing pain to or killing any life out of anger, or from a selfish purpose, or with the intention of injuring it. Refraining from so doing is *ahimsa*.

The physician who prescribes bitter medicine causes you pain but does no *himsa*. If he fails to prescribe bitter medicine when it is necessary to do so, he fails in his duty of *ahimsa*. The surgeon who, from fear of causing pain to his patient, hesitates to amputate a rotten limb is guilty of *himsa*. He who refrains from killing a murderer who is about to kill his ward (when he cannot prevent him otherwise) earns no merit, but commits a sin, he practises no *ahimsa* but *himsa* out of a fatuous sense of *ahimsa*.

Let us now examine the root of *ahimsa*. It is utter most selflessness. Selflessness means complete freedom from a regard for one's body. When some sage observed man killing numberless creatures big and small out of a regard for his own body, he was shocked at his ignorance. He pitied him for thus forgetting the deathless soul, encased within the perishable body, and for thinking of the ephemeral physical pleasure in preference to the eternal bliss of the spirit. He therefrom deduced the duty of complete self-effacement. He saw that if man desired to realise himself *i. e.*, Truth, he could do so only by being completely detached from the body *i. e.*, by making all other beings feel safe from him. That is the way of *ahimsa*.

A realisation of this truth shows that the sin of *himsa* consists not in merely taking life, but in taking life for the sake of one's perishable body. All destruction therefore involved in the process of eating, drinking etc. is selfish and therefore *himsa*. But man regards it to be unavoidable and puts up with it. But the destruction of bodies of tortured creatures being for their own peace cannot be regarded as *himsa*, or the unavoid-

able destruction caused for the purpose of protecting one's wards cannot be regarded as *himsa*.

This line of reasoning is liable to be most mischievously used. But that is not because the reasoning is faulty, but because of the inherent frailty of man to catch at whatever pretexts he can get to deceive himself to satisfy his selfishness or egoism. But that danger may not excuse one from defining the true nature of *ahimsa*. Thus we arrive at the following result from the foregoing.

(1) It is impossible to sustain one's body without the destruction of other bodies to some extent.

(2) All have to destroy some life

(a) for sustaining their own bodies,

(b) for protecting those under their care ; or

(c) sometimes for the sake of those whose life is taken,

3 (a) and (b) in (2) mean *himsa* to a greater or less extent.

(c) means no *himsa*, and is therefore *ahimsa*. *Himsa* in (a) and (b) is unavoidable.

4 A progressive *ahimsa*-ist will therefore commit the *himsa* contained in (a) and (b) as little as possible, only when it is unavoidable, and after full and mature deliberation and having exhausted all remedies to avoid it.

The destruction of dogs that I have suggested comes under (4) and can therefore be resorted to only when it is unavoidable, when there is no other remedy and after mature deliberation. But I have not the slightest doubt that refraining from that destruction when it is unavoidable is worse than destruction. And, therefore, although there can be no absolute duty to kill dogs etc., it becomes a necessary duty for certain people at certain times and under certain circumstances.

I shall now try to take up one by one some of the questions that have been asked me. Some correspondents demand personal replies, and in case I fail to do so threaten to publish their views. It is impossible for me to reach every individual correspondent by a personal reply. Those that are necessary I shall deal with here. I have no right, nor desire, to stop

people from carrying on the controversy in other papers. I may remind the correspondents, however, that threats and impatience have no place in a sober and religious discussion.

A correspondent asks :

"How did you hit upon the religion of destroying dogs at the old age of 57? If it had occurred to you earlier than this why were you silent so long?"

Man proclaims a truth only when he sees it and when it is necessary, no matter even if it be in his old age. I have long recognised the duty of killing such animals within the limits laid down above, and have acted up to it on occasions. In India the villagers have long recognised the duty of destroying intruding dogs. They keep dogs who scare away intruders and kill them if they do not escape with their lives. These watch-dogs are purposely maintained with a view to protecting the village from other dogs etc., as also from thieves and robbers whom they attack fearlessly. The dogs have become a nuisance only in cities, and the best remedy is to have a law against stray dogs. That will involve the least destruction of dogs and ensure the protection of citizens.

Another correspondent asks :

'Do you expect to convince people by logical argument in a matter like that of *ahimsa*?'

The rebuke contained in this is not without some substance. But I wanted to convince no one. Being a student and practiser of *ahimsa* I have had to give expression to my views when the occasion demanded it. I have an opinion based on experience that logic and reasoning have some place—no doubt very small—in a religious discussion.

## V

A friend writes a long letter mentioning his difficulties and pointing out what Jainism has to say to him, a Shrawak, in the matter. One of his questions is :

'You say that if we can neither take individual charge of roving dogs nor have a *panjrapole* for them, the only alternative

is to kill them. Does that mean that every roving dog should be killed, although it may not be rabid? Don't you agree that we leave unmolested all harmful beasts, birds and reptiles, so long as they do not actually harm us? Why should the dogs be an exception? Where is the humanity of shooting innocent dogs whenever they are found roving? How can one wishing well to all living beings do this?'

The writer has misunderstood my meaning. I would not suggest even the destruction of rabid dogs for the sake of it, much less that of innocent roving dogs. Nor have I said that these latter should be killed wherever they are found. I have only suggested legislation to that effect, so that as soon as the law is made, humane people might wake up in the matter and devise measures for the better management of stray dogs. Some of these might be owned, some might be put in quarantine. The remedy, when it is taken, will be once for all. Stray dogs do not drop down from heaven. They are a sign of the idleness, indifference and ignorance of society. When they grow into a nuisance, it is due to our ignorance and want of compassion. A stray dog is bound to take to his heels if you do not feed him. The measure that I have suggested is actuated no less by a consideration of the welfare of the dogs than by that of society. It is the duty of a humanitarian to allow no living being aimlessly to roam about. In performance of that duty it may be his duty once in a way to kill some dogs.

Here is another question :

"I agree that the dogs are sure to be killed by man whenever they become a menace to society. But you say, 'To wait until they get rabid is not to be merciful to them. 'This means that every dog is potentially rabid and that therefore it should' be killed as a matter of precaution. I met a friend from the Ashram who assured me that you did not mean this, and that you had suggested it only as a last resource when dogs had become a menacé. This is not clear from your articles. Will you make it clear? "

My previous articles and my answer to the first question

leave nothing to be cleared. I must explain what I mean when I say that you cannot wait until the dogs gets rabid. Every stray dog is harmful. The harm is confined to cities alone and it must stop. We do not wait until the serpent bites us. The rabies of the dog is concealed in its capacity to bite. A friend has sent me figures of cases of hydrophobia treated in the Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad :

Period	Cases from the city	Cases from the District	Total
Jan. to Dec. '25.	194	923	1117
Jan. to Sept. '26.	295	695	990

These figures must alarm every one who is interested in the welfare of the community, especially if he is a humanitarian. I admit that all the cases may not have been of hydrophobia. But it is difficult to say, whether a dog is or is not rabid, and many run in fear to the hospital because most dogs are found to be rabid afterwards. There is only one remedy to relieve them of this fear and it is not to allow dogs to roam about.

I was in England 40 years ago when effective measures were taken to stamp out rabies. There were of course no stray dogs there. But even for the dogs which had regular owners, an order was passed that dogs found without collars with the name and address of the owner thereon and without muzzles would be killed. The measure was taken purely in the public interest. Practically the next day all the dogs in London were found to be with collars and muzzles. It was therefore necessary to kill only a very few. If any one thinks that the people in the West are innocent of humanity he is sadly mistaken. The ideal of humanity in the West is perhaps lower, but their practice of it is very much more thorough than ours. We rest content with a lofty ideal and are slow or lazy in its practice. We are wrapped in deep darkness, as is evident from our paupers, cattle and other animals. They are eloquent of our irreligion rather than of religion.

Here is a third question :

"You have different definitions of religion for the individual and for society. But why should not religion in both cases be the same? The ideal ought to be the same for both. That it may be impossible to carry it out is a different matter. For even in case of the individual only the occasion can show how far he has been able to carry out his ideal in practice. You yourself have said that your ideal is to save even a cruel animal at the risk of your life, but you could not say what you would actually do when faced by such an animal. There is no reason why society should not similarly have a lofty ideal and leave the individuals free to practise it according to their capacity."

My definition of religion for the individual and for society is the same. The ideal must always be the same, but the practice I have conceived to be different in the case of the individual and the society. Truly speaking practice differs in case of every individual. I do not know of two men having the same extent of the practice of *ahimsa*, though their definition of *ahimsa* is the same. The extent of practice in case of society is the average of the different capacities of its members. Thus for instance where a section of the society is milk-arian and the other fruitarian, the practice for the society extends to the use of milk and fruit.

The writer next sets out two Jain doctrines as follows :

"Jainism is based on the doctrine of *syadvada*—many sidedness of reality. As is aptly said : 'No absolute rule is correct ; only the relative rule is the correct rule.' Which means that an act which may be described as *himsa* under certain circumstances may be *ahimsa* under other circumstances. Man should always use his discrimination in determining his conduct. There are two classes of Jains *Sadhus* (the monks) and *Shrawaks* (the laity). Their code of conduct is thus defined: The *Sadhu* is always non-violent. He may not eat to save himself, may not cook for himself, may not walk even a step for his own purpose—all his activity is for the welfare of the community and it should be as harmless as possible. He has to avoid the 42 infringements laid down in the *Shastras*.



The *Sadhu* is described as *nirgrantha*—free from bonds. So far as I know there is no *Sadhu* today who can satisfy the definition of a *Sadhu* given above.

The *Shrawak* may not kill or injure any living being, except when it is essential for himself. He is a wordly man and he cannot take his humanity farther than this. So if 20 per cent compassion is expected of the *Sadhu*, 1.25 per cent is expected of the *Shrawak*. If the latter goes beyond the measure expected of him he approaches the state of a *Sadhu*, but as a *Shrawak* nothing more is expected of him."

I knew the substance of this distinction. I am quite conscious that the Jain doctrine is not contrary to the opinion I have expressed in these articles. If the Jains accept the interpretation given above, the opinion expressed by me can be deduced from it. But whether they accept it or not, I humbly submit that my opinion is capable of being, and has been, independently justified.

A friend has sent a long letter containing a number of questions and raising a number of difficulties. He has also sent me his copies of *Navajivan* with profuse marginal notes on this series of articles. Some of his questions have been already answered in these pages. Without reproducing here the rest of his questions I propose merely to give my answers.

I think I have been considering the whole question quite dispassionately. I do not think I could be accused of any partiality for *himsa* or for my own peculiar views in the matter. My partiality is all for truth which I seek to find out through *ahimsa*. It is my conviction that it cannot be found out in any other way. The question in dispute for me is not whether truth is our goal or not, nor whether *ahimsa* is or is not the only way to it. There is no possibility of my ever doubting these fundamental principles. The question before me is about the practice of these principles. Everyday I see fresh aspects opening out to me. There is every possibility of my making mistakes in the practice of *ahimsa* and though I am taking every precaution possible to avoid them, it is possible that I may err occasionally

Let not friends therefore impute partiality to me when I cannot agree with them. Let them believe me to be unconsciously in error and bear with me. I now proceed to give the answers.

1. The question to solve is not what is hydrophobia and how to treat it.

2. The municipality or the Government will find a remedy not in accordance with *ahimsa* but with what they conceive to be public interest. The Mahajan can find the right remedy if they are truly non-violent. Government will never subscribe to the absolute principle of non-destruction of animals (dogs in the present case). Municipalities have members belonging to different faiths and different communities. They cannot therefore be expected to insist on a non-violent remedy.

3. The duty of finding a non-violent remedy is the Mahajan's. It is a mistake to think that the Mahajan is blameless or helpless.

4. For the purpose of this discussion I make no distinction between a rabid dog and a man who has run amuck and is in the act of dealing death. Habitual violence is a disease. The habitually violent man goes on in his murderous career only because he is beside himself. Both a rabid dog and a rabid man are worthy of pity. When they are found in the act of injuring others, and when there is no other remedy than to take their life, it becomes a duty to do so to arrest their activity. The duty is all the greater in case of a votary of *ahimsa*.

5. I have never meant that every one should own a dog. What I have said is that the dogs should in no case be ownerless. Not that the owned dogs will be immune, but the owners will be responsible for them if they are diseased or get rabies.

6. The ownerless stray dogs are not innocent as lambs. They were never so. Owned dogs are generally so. The purpose of the present controversy is to make all the dogs innocuous.

7. I have never suggested that roving dogs should be killed wherever found. I have suggested enabling legislation in the interest of the dogs themselves. That will make humanely

inclined people alive to their sense of duty and they will then either own dogs or find out some other remedy and thus make the existence of stray dogs impossible. In refusing alms to the beggar the purpose is not to starve him, but to teach him self-help, to make him a man. The duty of killing dogs arises in the circumstances and to the extent I have indicated in the previous articles. To say that it is a sin to extirpate dogs is not to contradict me. For I have never expressed a contrary opinion.

8. It is idle to discuss whether Mr. Ambalal's conduct was or was not proper, or whether my opinion about it was or was not correct. The public is not in full possession of the details of the incident. The broader question of *ahimsa* is the main issue, and to bring in Mr. Ambalal in the discussion is to cloud the issue.

9. The issue is : Whether, in consonance with the principle of *ahimsa*, it may be a duty to kill certain dogs under certain circumstances, when no other alternative is possible? I submit that it may be, and I hold that there cannot be two opinions in the matter. There may be a difference as to whether particular circumstances justify the act. The consolation for a votary of *ahimsa* lies in the fact that from his standpoint such circumstances can only be rare.

10. But I can see one difference of opinion that must for the time being remain. In the letter under consideration as also in many others I see that there is an instinctive horror of killing living beings under any circumstances whatsoever. For instance, an alternative has been suggested in the shape of confining even rabid dogs in a certain place and allowing them to die a slow death. Now my idea of compassion makes this thing impossible for me. I cannot for a moment bear to see a dog, or for that matter any other living being, helplessly suffering the torture of a slow death. I do not kill a human being thus circumstanced because I have more hopeful remedies. I should kill a dog similarly situated, because in its case I am without a remedy. Should my child be attacked by rabies and there was no hopeful remedy to relieve his agony, I should consider it my duty to take

his life. Fatalism has its limits. We leave things to Fate after exhausting all the remedies. One of the remedies and the final one to relieve the agony of a tortured child is to take his life.

But I shall not labour this point. What to my mind is impotence of the votaries of ahimsa is an obstacle to a true understanding of this dharma. I hope therefore that those who differ from me will for the present bear with me.

So much about the thoughtful letter of a friend, I shall now deal with an angry letter.

"You have been" says the letter, "so much under the Western influence that you have learnt to think it proper to kill lower beings for the sake of man. It is better for you to confess your error and apologise to the world. You should have made up your mind in this matter after exhaustless sifting. Instead, you have passionately taken sides and discredited yourself."

This is the least offensive sentence I have picked up from letters of this type. I submit I have not formed my opinion without much deliberation. It is not an opinion I have recently formed. Neither is it hasty. One should not let his so-called greatness come in the way of the formation of opinion, otherwise he cannot arrive at truth.

I do not think that everything Western is to be rejected. I have condemned the Western civilisation in no measured terms. I still do so, but it does not mean that everything Western should be rejected. I have learnt a great deal from the West and I am grateful to it. I should think myself unfortunate if contact with and the literature of the West had no influence on me. But I do not think I owe my opinion about the dogs to my Western education or Western influence. The West (with the exception of a small school of thought) thinks that it is no sin to kill the lower animals for what it regards to be the benefit of man. It has therefore encouraged vivisection. The West does not think it wrong to commit violence of all kinds for the satisfaction of the palate. I do not subscribe to these views. According to the Western standard, it is no sin, on the contrary it is a

merit, to kill animals that are no longer useful. Whereas I recognise limits at every step. I regard even the destruction of vegetable life as himsa. It is not the teaching of the West.

*Argumentum ad hominum* has no place in a discussion of principles and their practice. My opinions should be considered as they are irrespective of whether they are derived from the West or the East. Whether they are based on truth or untruth, himsa or ahimsa, is the only thing to be considered. I firmly believe that they are based on truth and ahimsa.

## VII

Some of my correspondents do not seem to realise the fundamental consideration underlying my suggestion for the destruction of dogs under certain circumstances. Thus, for instance, I have not made the suggestion in a purely utilitarian spirit. The utility to society incidentally accrues from the act, but the principal consideration is the relief of the long drawn-out agony of the creatures whose present condition it is simply impossible for me to tolerate. In the articles in this series there has not been even the remotest suggestion that man has the right of disposal over the lower animals and that he may therefore kill them for his own comfort or pleasure. One of the writers betrays a strange confusion of thought when he says that the characteristic of an exalted soul is that he remains unaffected by the misery around him. He is callous, rather than exalted, who has not learnt to melt at other's woe, who has not learnt to see himself in others and others in himself. Intense longing for the happiness of others was the mother of the discovery of *ahimsa*. And the sage who was the embodiment of compassion found his soul's delight in renouncing his own physical comfort and stopped killing for his pleasure the dumb creation about him.

A correspondent reminds me of the advice given me by Shri Rajchandra when I approached him with a doubt as to what I should do if a serpent threatened to bite me. Certainly his advice was that rather than kill the serpent I should allow

myself to be killed by it. But the correspondent forgets that it is not myself that is the subject-matter of the present discussion, but the welfare of society in general as also of the suffering animals. If I had approached Raychandbhai with the question whether I should or should not kill a serpent writhing in agony, and whose pain I could not relieve otherwise, or whether I should or should not kill a serpent threatening to bite a child under my protection, if I could not otherwise turn the reptile away, I do not know what answer he would have given. For me the answer is clear as daylight and I have given it.

A studious correspondent confronts me with some verses from a Jain philosopher and asks if I agree with the position taken up in them. One of the verses says: 'One should not kill even beasts of prey in the belief that by killing one such, he saves the lives of many.' Another says: 'Nor should one kill them out of a compassionate feeling that if they were suffered to live longer they might sink deeper into sin.' 'Nor,' says the third verse, 'should one kill distressed creatures presuming that he would thereby shorten the length of their agony.'

To me the meaning of the verses is clear. And it is this that a particular theory should not be the spring of action in any case. You may commit *himsa*, not in order that you thereby realise in practice a pet theory of yours, but because you are driven to it as an imperative duty. Work which spontaneously comes to one's lot, or action without attachment, in the words of the Gita, is the duty of a seeker after *moksha*. Confine your energy to work that comes your way, I conceive the Jain philosopher to say, never seek fresh fields of activity. The verses, to me, define the mental attitude of detachment that should govern one's action in cases where *himsa* seems to be imperative and unavoidable.

But I have arrived at my present views independently of any authority, though originally they may have been drawn from various sources, and I submit that they are in perfect consonance with *ahimsa*, even though they may be proved to be contrary to the teaching of the philosopher.

## VIII

Letters on this subject are still pouring in, but I fail to discover in them any new question or any fresh argument advanced. I would therefore ask those who have been thinking on this subject to read this series of articles over and over again. I do so without the slightest hesitation, inasmuch as they are the result not of ideas hastily formed, but of experience of many years. I have presented no new principles, but have tried to re-state old principles. I cannot say how far the presentation is correct, but as it represents my honest conviction, and as many friends expect me to solve intricate problems in *ahimsa*, I can only ask them to turn to the series I have been writing. Some of my correspondents wrench my own sentences from their contexts and quote them against me, some quote part of them and omit the most essential remainder.

Thus I have never advocated the extirpation of dogs as a class. On the contrary my suggestions have been made for their betterment. I have repeatedly said that I have suggested the destruction of certain dogs under certain circumstances. Even this may be open to question. If it is, the objector should address himself only to that and nothing more.

I continue to be the same votary of *ahimsa* that I was before. I still continue to hold life not only in man and animal, but in plant and flower, as sacred, and yet make use of vegetables and flowers and fruit. Only the spirit behind the use is : 'He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life ever-lasting.' Destruction of dogs, even as that of plant or vegetable, is advised only when it is a matter of imperative duty, and only when it is meant not to sow to the flesh, but to the spirit.

What torments me is the impotence of the votary of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is not impotence. *Ahimsa* is not powerlessness. *Ahimsa* is unconquerable power. We shrink from it as we are dazed by its over-powering lustre. Only very few of us can catch a glimpse of it. *Ahimsa* is the distinguishing charac-

teristic of an untrammelled spirit. It is at the root of a number of other qualities—discrimination, detachment, penance, equability and knowledge. It is the way of the brave, not of shrinkers. He who would understand *ahimsa* must understand the meaning of the inevitable *himsa* one sees about oneself. This statement, I know, is liable to abuse. But what is there free from this danger? Is not even God's name turned to the worst account? Have not rivers of blood been made to flow in His name? Have we not worshipped the Devil in His name? But that does not diminish His glory. That does not mean that we shall take His name in a secret corner.

All action is tainted inasmuch as it presupposes *himsa*. And yet we free ourselves from the bondage of action through action itself. This body is the receptacle of sin, and yet we seek to achieve salvation by making of that abode of sin God's own sanctuary. Even so with *himsa*.

And this *himsa*, calculated to take us on the onward path, must be spontaneous, must be the lowest minimum, must be rooted in compassion, must have discrimination, restraint, detachment at its back, and must lead us every moment onward to the path of *ahimsa*.

I propose to conclude this series with a brief reference by way of illustration to the way in which we are trying to solve the dog problem in the Ashram.

The problem is as old as the Ashram itself. The activity of the Mahajan has made it more serious, and we have put up with it not without reluctance. It is our practice to destroy rabid dogs. Two or three such cases have occurred during the last ten years. Healthy dogs have not been destroyed. They are being refused food. I see that if the rule is strictly observed we would be all happy, but we cannot do so. Every inmate does not yet realise the necessity of it, and those who do are not sufficiently alive to the observance of the rule. And there are also employees in the Ashram,—how can they be made to observe the rule?

Some dogs we feed, there being no other alternative. Two



bitches and their puppies are being maintained at present. The puppies have been kept in cosy boxes or baskets to keep them from cold, and are being given milk and the dams get specially prepared food.

On the other hand, we have applied to the Mahajan to remove stray dogs from here. The request has been accepted, though their cart has not yet come.

I have explained to the best of my light our duty to the dogs. Every one has to act according to his own light. Let no one learn from me the *duty* of destruction. He may under certain circumstances permit himself to have recourse to it. I have laid down the limits. Every one observes and will observe the law according to his own capacity. I have referred to the present practice at the Ashram simply to serve as an illustration of what my opinion means.

The religion of *ahimsa* consists in allowing others the maximum of convenience at the maximum of inconvenience to us, even at the risk of life. Every one has to determine for himself the amount of inconvenience he is capable of putting up with. No third party can determine it for him. Religion, even as the soul, is both one and many.

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MISCELLANEOUS



*12th February 1925*

## LEAVES FROM A DIARY

[Misses Angus and Hindsley were sent from Adyar to the Ashram by Dr. Besant to learn carding, spinning etc., so as to be able to train others at Adyar. They passed a month at the Ashram and kept a diary of their daily experiences. On their departure they left relevant notes from their diary for publication in these pages. On first reading I thought I could not well publish them as they appeared to me to be too personal. The next thought was to cut out the personal references and then publish them. But on rereading, I have decided to present the notes without a single alteration. I have stood the strain of personal reference now for a long time. I can very well bear the additional strain. There is a merit in the notes which compels publication. The references to the Ashram are not wholly true. All is not so rosy as it has appeared to these friends. The Ashram has its jars, it has its trials and difficulties, it has to wear away many a rough edge. But it does try to live up to its name. There are certainly things about the Ashram which can be copied with safety. But I must warn the reader against being carried away by some of the flattering description, and applying for admission. There is a standing notice from the Manager to me that he has more inmates than he can take care of and more work than he can cope with. Let those who like the way of life described by Misses Angus and Hindsley copy it wherever they may be. M. K. G.]

## THROUGH THE ANCIENT CITY

After a very pleasant journey up from Bombay we arrived at Ahmedabad at 7-55 a. m. and were met by Mr. Devadas Gandhi who gave us an exceedingly warm welcome. Leaving the station we drove through the quaint old town with its fortified walls, narrow streets and ancient gateways, over one of which we were very much amused to see several monkeys scrambling. Whilst awaiting for Mr. Devadas to appear we

had the interesting experience of seeing four Mussalman ladies who were veiled from head to foot. The garb that they had on appeared to be a circular cap covering the head, and gathered on to this was a sort of closed cape reaching to the ground, with no opening excepting for the eyes where there was a little grating. One was being led along by a gentleman and the others were being guided by little children. They were evidently people of quality, for the garments they wore were of rich silk and the little gratings for the eyes appeared to be of gold.

Our passage through this ancient town awoke in us a great desire to see more of it, for no doubt it is a place of great interest. Passing out through a most impressive gate way we crossed the Sabarmati river where we were struck by the beauty of the whole scene. The wonderful domes of some of the temples and other buildings, the population in the rich red attire, which is so striking an addition to the picture, going down to the water to bathe, the dhobies already at work, all seen in the pale light of the rising of a winter sun just fascinated us and made us realize perhaps more than ever before that we were in this oldest of all lands.

The country is not fertile owing to the sandiness of the soil, although we did see several varieties of cotton being grown. Tamarind trees formed an avenue for some distance along the road and in some of them we saw more monkeys looking very much at home. This is the first time we have contacted them in their native haunts. Donkeys by the hundred were being used as beasts of burden near the town and further out we met camels ambling along in their quaint way. The road followed the course of the river all the way out to Sabarmati and when we arrived at the Ashram we found it standing upon fairly high ground overlooking the river.

#### AN INDIAN WELCOME

After meeting Mrs. Gandhi and being welcomed in true Indian fashion we were taken to our room. Everything had

been made very comfortable and they had gone to the trouble of having beds arranged for us. As we had brought all the necessary appliances for sleeping and cooking thinking that our English ways would be strange to our hosts it was somewhat astonishing and very gratifying to find that they had gone to so much trouble for our comfort. A bathroom had been given us and this added much to our comfort, especially as we had been warned that bathing at the well was the custom of the place.

We had brought our cooking utensils, but Mrs. Gandhi who is a noted housekeeper was very anxious that we should be her guests and at least take our principal meals with her. To this we very readily agreed and as the food is excellent, being prepared according to Mr. Gandhi's ideas on dietetics, which thoroughly suited our simple tastes, we took full advantage of this generous hospitality.

#### THE ASHRAM

The buildings of the Ashram are in a large compound and have extended on to the other side of the road. They comprise weaving sheds, the first we visited having carpet looms in the open courtyard in the centre and Khaddar looms upon the veranda all round three sides, there are twentytwo looms. In the great Ashram building upon the other side of the road, the centre of the building is again taken up with weaving, and opening from the lower veranda there are many rooms in which carding, dyeing and the grading of cotton sent in from all the Congress members is done. Over these rooms are others, some of which are used as living rooms, others which are used as classrooms for children in the mornings and in which spinning by older students takes place. The dyeing sample room was exceedingly interesting to us, all dyes used being vegetable dyes. Beyond this is another building where the children spin in the afternoons and to our great delight we found that underneath it was the coolest room in the Ashram, the library. To the east of these are the quarters where some of the Ashram

students and teachers live. Many of the students have been away at Belgaum at the Congress session with Mr. Gandhi, several of them taking part in spinning competitions for which there were five prizes given. We were told that there are about 130 members of the Ashram so that when they all return it will indeed be a busy hive.

After tea Rasik, Mr. Gandhi's young grandson, took us along the river side. Scrambling back up the hill-side we came to the cattle sheds where we saw many beautiful beasts, bulls, cows, dear little calves and goats, all exceedingly well kept and splendidly fed. A herd of goats with half a dozen little kids in a tiny sort of cage which were released for our benefit, looked about the finest we have seen in India. We visited the milk dairy, an exquisitely clean building with highly polished brass vessels lined with tin.

#### MR. GANDHI AT WORK

At 6-o'clock we had dinner in Mrs. Gandhi's kitchen, she sitting cooking chapaties the while. She has two small charcoal stoves built of fire brick against the wall and a small moveable stove in front of her. She sits upon a board with her store cupboard behind her so that she can reach the things she wants without moving. Her cooking utensils are all of brass, tin lined and beautifully kept. She never rises during the process of cooking a meal and anything which is not within her reach is brought to her by her grand-daughter, the child of her eldest son. When necessary she supplements her fire-places by using a primus stove.

To each person is given a large brass tray with smaller vessels of the same metal containing the various vegetarian dishes eaten with rice and chapaties. The food here is not like the ordinary Indian curry dishes highly seasoned with chillies, so that we have been able to eat and enjoy all that has been served to us. Dall or lentil soup of some kind is served every day and is always of the most lovely golden yellow colour, next to it is always a dish of tomatoes and other vegetables,

cauliflower, cabbage, brinjal and so on. The next dish so far has contained a kind of olive preserved in syrup, it is also home made and is exceedingly good, and when the weather is not too cold we have creamy curds to end up with. We shall never see a more interesting or unique sight whilst we are in India than this charming little lady and first-class house keeper as she sits in her snow white garments catering to the needs of the inner man.

#### EVENING PRAYER

Immediately after dinner, and after the ringing of a gong at 6-30 p. m. the whole compound assembles for prayers outside. There are three rectangular spaces of sand surrounded by low walls and on these carpets are spread upon which we all sit down. The scene is one which never fails to enchant us, the white robed figures of men and women in attitudes of reverent prayer, the stars overhead, the young boys around the musician who leads the singing and expounds the reading, the twittering of the last late birds in the trees all go to make a scene of entrancing beauty, steeped in the devotional atmosphere which makes for peace and happiness.

After the singing, portions from the Ramayana are read aloud, explained and sung to music. The young boys who are being educated at the Ashram are evidently fascinated by the story for they get closer and closer to their master not to lose a single word of the theme. Then after the closing prayer silently we all get up and reverently walk to the path-way where we generally stay to smile at the small children who are by this time more than half asleep. As our Gujarati is limited to some half dozen words our conversation is of course not very fluent as to speech, but gesture and expression can do much to convey our friendly feelings for these dear kindly people who are so much interested in all we are doing.

A few days after our arrival Mr. C. Rajagopalacharya returned from the Congress at Belgaum to our great delight, for we had not seen him since he left Adyar with Mr. Devadas,



## UNDER THE TASKMASTER

Our first Sunday was a wonderful day. As usual we began the day with prayers at 4- a. m. After breakfast we went for our lesson in the carding room, we always tackled this strenuous labour first thing in the morning while it was still cool. This was our fifth lesson and I, (Miss Angus) asked our teacher what he thought about my progress, he said 'you are very much better', and then he added, for fear I should become conceited perhaps, "but you are not perfect yet." How we both laughed; no one knew better than we did, how far from perfect our work was. After making up the cotton we had carded into poonis, we went on to the spinning room where we were progressing splendidly and increasing our speed.

## MR. GANDHI'S SURPRISE ARRIVAL

At 10-30 a. m., the whole Ashram adjourns for its midday meal. At 11-a.m. we went to the Gandhi bungalow. Mr. Rajagopalacharya was awaiting us and was in good spirits. Just as we were about to begin our meal an Indian gentleman crossed the garden and there were loud exclamations. It was Mr. Gandhi's private secretary and they were all asking him where Mr. Gandhi was. Suddenly from his room at the end of the veranda came a voice saying, "Somewhere!" and a moment later the great man came through the door and we were introduced to him. He extended a very warm welcome to us and made many enquiries as to whether all our creature comforts had been attended to by his people. He has a very charming manner and the thing which struck us most was the rich quality of his voice and his wonderful command of English. He had returned from Belgaum where the Congress Session had been held and was evidently in excellent spirits for the vitality radiated from his frail figure.

## 'A LIVE WIRE'

Mr. Gandhi is certainly what the modern Americans call 'A live wire', one felt the electricity scintillating and corus-

cating as he talked, and we could readily understand his great influence over his fellowmen. Truth and sincerity are in every line of him and seemed to demand the same truth and sincerity in return. One could never be artificial with such a man, for his keen clear vision penetrates all outer wrappings. We had already met some of his closest friends and had admired each in turn, now that we have met him we can fully appreciate why such love, adoration and devotion are extended to him. All residents upon the compound from the oldest to almost the youngest had been joyously looking forward to Mahatmaji's return. No blast of trumpets, no garlands or music, no special preparations heralded this Saint's arrival home; simply and quietly, unknown to all, he had slipped into his room—to emerge later into the very bosom of his family and friends. The children who just love him and whom one feels he loves most dearly, came flocking around him, no feeling of fear or awe comes within his aura, all are included in his benevolent kindly heart, any aloofness or assumption of superiority in connection with him is unthinkable. No wonder he is, as he well deserves to be, the idol of the people. All day he mixed most freely with his friends and relatives, visiting homes upon the compound and interesting himself in the veriest details of the place.

It is not too much for us to say that the feeling left by our first meeting is that of having contacted a man nearer to the Christlike ideal than any other living person.

The afternoon was spent in showing Mr. Cuthbert, who had come to visit us, around the Ashram and the dairy buildings, and he was much impressed with the charm of the whole place. It seems that everyone is happy whilst here, happy at work, at play, with each other, and each doing all in his power to make others happy. This spirit of joy, restfulness and helpfulness is a most outstanding feature of the place. Would that one found it more often.

In the evening we had a short walk and then went over for dinner. At 6-30 p. m. we went to prayers, and when these were

over, at Mahatmaji's invitation, we sang two hymns, first reading the words aloud.

#### AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING

Beautiful and impressive as the prayers had been on the previous evenings, there was a deeper feeling of joy because Mahatmaji had once more returned to his home. Every one felt the benediction of his presence as he sat facing us with a wee grand-niece nestling close up to him. The few words he spoke that evening were for the children who all sat in front. Simple as the whole service was, the influences of great Presences poured down upon us and for a short while at any rate we became channels through which a golden stream of love flowed revitalising all our hearts and lifting them to that plane where we became as children and saw God. Everyone was reluctant to break the holy silence which wrapped us round, and as we slowly dispersed it was evident that each one carried with him a blessed sense of peace and calm which still remains and will ever remain. An unforgettable evening. One of the precious memories which make this existence worth while.

After his return, the whole of the next two days, Monday and Tuesday, he observed silence so that he might prepare himself for the Kathiawar Conference at Bhavnagar, the following Wednesday. This silence was broken just before prayers on Tuesday evening, when we had the pleasure of another chat with him, and he invited us to accompany him on his morning walk as far as the jail gates. He refers to the jail as his second home and when we suggested that jail had no terrors for him, he replied "No indeed it has not."

#### REMINISCENCES OF A CHAT

Wednesday January 7th, was a real red letter day. True to his promise, Mahatmaji came to our room for us at 9 O'clock, and we started off for the walk which had been planned the day before. As we passed the compound of the jail we saw fine vegetables growing; this turned our conversation from our reasons for coming to India to the question of prison reform,

and we all agreed that such institutions should give up the idea of punishment and replace it by reformation, and that most crimes were the outcome of social conditions, when you can change those most crimes will disappear. He pointed out the prisoners who were being used instead of bullocks to draw water from the well. He told us of the test to which he had been put when starting his Ashram. He was asked whether he was prepared to take "untouchables" and had replied in the affirmative. His questioners little knew that this test would be carried into effect within a month of the opening, but when a married couple of those people applied for admittance, he accepted them immediately. The man is now principal of a small Ashram run upon similar lines, and his little daughter has now been adopted by Mr. Gandhi, and she is one of the little folk who nestle up so lovingly to him during the time of prayer. His encouragement to make our stay here as long as possible served to give us further proof of the sincerity of the welcome he had extended, and Miss Hindsley's remark that our coming here might become a habit was met with unstinted approval, and he expressed a hope that others might follow our example. At our room door just before parting, he told us that he was to observe silence for the rest of the day, or at least until 4. O'clock. and that he was leaving for Bhavnagar at 8 O'clock.

Our first working day in the weaving shed was Saturday January 10th. We retwisted double yarn to make it stronger and prepared other yarn upon the yarn walk. In the evening we walked as far as the National University with Mr. Devadas and some of the children. As we walked we witnessed a very wonderful sunset and as we returned the moon rose like a ball of golden fire. Mr. Devadas told us the life story of many of the members of the Ashram and of the wonderful devotion of many most remarkably able and brilliant men who have been or are here.

Monday the 12th, we continued our work in the weaving shed, and got all the thread ready to start weaving. After prayers in the evening two of our women friends carried us off to one of

their homes, and there we found that the commandeering of us had been pre-arranged. All mats were spread ready for our reception, an interpreter was called from an adjoining home, and he kindly spent a whole hour telling us of the wonderful story of our host and hostess who had been in Fiji.

#### GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

The following Wednesday at 7-30 a. m. we started to walk to the new National University which was to be opened formally by Mahatmaji immediately he returned from his Bhavnagar Conference. The opening ceremony was fixed for 8-30 a. m. and Mahatmaji was not due until 7-30 a. m. so it was quick work. The morning was crisp, and walking was perfect, various parties joined us from time to time and were hailed with morning greetings. At one point the trees were populated with monkeys who gazed curiously at us and seemed to wonder what such strange beings could be doing. One very large creature stood upon the road side with its back turned towards us, perfectly indifferent to all passers by. As we neared the college buildings we stopped for a short time to take a photograph of the distant view before getting too close.

The college is a large two-storied block shining white and pure against the lovely blue of the Indian sky. The open country all around is not thickly wooded but just enough to break the monotony of the level and to soften the distant horizon. The grounds of the college are very bare at present, but considering that it is only eighteen months since it was begun, that is not surprising. As we drew near we saw that the drive was hung with flags, and decorations of leaves were under every window. The front archway was planned with delicate tracery in white stone at the sides and top, and the whole arch was surmounted with an arrangement of three smaller pointed arches of red brick, through which the blue sky appeared to be of a deeper hue, a beautiful contrast to the red and white of the stone.

We found the great quadrangle, round which the college is built, filled with people mostly in white garb, indeed the majority

seemed to be wearing khaddar, practically every man had a Gandhi cap, but as the morning was somewhat chilly still in spite of the brilliant sunshine, the gaily coloured shawls in orange, green, turquoise blue, scarlet and crimson, made gorgeous splashes of colour as their wearers moved about greeting each other. The Principal and Senate of the University were wearing shawls of pale pure azure—the very colour of truth—eternal, spiritual.

The students were assembled in one of the lower class rooms, those who were graduates wearing a khaddar bag at the side, a rose pink square about three inches stitched upon the outer side with certain signs upon it.

The Principal took us round the college, showed us the students' rooms, the class rooms and halls. We then went up to the first floor veranda and on to an exhibition of the students' work in Art, where we saw many clever sketches of prominent men connected with public life and the University, chief among them being of course Mahatmaji and the Principal. There were many water colours and some very handsome designs from nature-drawing. There was one very clever cartoon of Mr. Gandhi and Mahomed Ali running together in a three-legged race, depicting Hindu-Muslim unity.

We then returned to the entrance of the college to await Mahatmaji's arrival, and presently he drove up with other members of his family. After this we were conducted to where the ladies were sitting, upon the right of the students who were facing the platform. Almost immediately, Mahatmaji, the Principal and the Senate of the University formed a procession along one side of the quadrangle and walked in their blue shawls to the canopied platform.

The first item on the programme was a sanskrit prayer chanted very beautifully by one of the group of musicians; then followed some Indian music on the Vina to the accompaniment of a small drum which is manipulated with both hands. After this the report was read and a list of the students recited. Then each student was called by name, and upon

approaching the platform was presented by Mahatmaji with a scroll recording his name and degree.

One of the speakers was a Mussalman of fine commanding appearance, looking like a true follower of the Prophet.

When the presidential address was about to be delivered, Mr. Gandhi, who had been sitting upon the floor behind a low table, mounted the table and sat in characteristic Indian fashion upon it. He makes a most impressive figure wherever and whenever we see him, but upon this occasion it was further enhanced by the nature and beauty of the surroundings. The central figure raised from the ground, surrounded by the fine white pillars which hold the green garlanded canopy, and backed by the blue of the shawls which all the faculty wore, made an unforgettable picture. His speech was given in Gujarati and lasted for about 45 minutes. From what we were told, just in a brief sentence, his address urged the necessity of spinning as a basis for the franchise and ultimate freedom of India.

Another hymn was sung and a vote of thanks given, and then the blue-shawled procession formed again and went up to the Art Exhibition, closely followed by the ladies who were allowed to see it first, the men waiting *en bloc* until the ladies had passed on. We had a further look at the exhibition, and then left accompanied by two members of the Ashram who constituted themselves our bodyguard.

As we were passing the Native village about a quarter of a mile from the Ashram, we sighted a number of fine camels coming from the river on to the road; we were anxious to snapshot them so crossed a sandy waste and were rewarded by the men pulling up the animals and allowing us to photograph them three times.

On the 15th we began to weave a piece of Khaddar and great excitement reigned in the land. In the evening Mr. Devadas came over bringing extra comforts for us at night, for it had turned very cold. Whilst with us he told us the origin of the sacred thread worn by the Brahmins.

## WITH THE EXPERTS

Next day Mr. Maganlal Gandhi returned from his tour, he is the Manager of the Ashram, is a most charming man, and fully comes up to the description which we have heard of him. We felt that now we should make even greater progress in our work for he has the whole of the processes at his finger tips. Mr. C. Rajagopalacharya had left a note for him asking him to do all in his power to help us.

A day or two afterwards whilst carding in the morning Mr. Maganlal came and had a long chat and promised that when we went to the weaving shed in the afternoon, he would come and see wherein lay our difficulties and do what he could to help us to a real knowledge of weaving. He brought Mr. Balkrishna with him, in whose hands he eventually left us. This meant that all our troubles were over, and a great joy in the work began, for he is an enthusiast like ourselves; there is not a detail that he does not know and appreciate. This makes him a wonderful teacher. At the end of the afternoon with him we felt that we had a fuller grasp of what weaving really means. Mr. Maganlal and Balkrishna made us realise that good weaving depends upon the great accuracy of all parts of the loom and it was due to their untiring efforts that before the end of the afternoon we both felt that we had gained an immense amount of the knowledge we so much desired, and it was with some regret that we had to leave our looms when the bell rang for work to stop.

## SURMOUNTING OBSTACLES

After prayers we went to Mr. Maganlal's home and there he gave us a most interesting and thorough discussion of the processes involved in testing cotton. He described fully the methods applied in testing presspacked cotton as it arrives in the Mills, also the test for fresh cotton still containing its seeds or ginned. Besides the interest of the lesson he gave us so painstakingly, we had the joy of seeing him in his home life with his wife and daughters and little grand-niece, and we



felt that here was one more of the wonderful and exceptional men whom Mahatmaji draws to his fold. We might state here that it was Mr. Maganlal Gandhi who, throughout all the struggle for freedom of the Indians in South Africa, kept himself aloof from the struggle with which he most deeply sympathised, so that during the imprisonment of other members of the family someone might be able to give all the care and attention to the children of the families involved in the struggle.

### THE FRIEND OF THE POOR

Our work in the weaving shed was continued next day, and by evening we once more felt most grateful to our teachers for the apt way in which they handled this somewhat intricate process of weaving. It is the real inside knowledge of the whole working which makes them able to anticipate what may be our difficulties. After prayers we went again to Mr. Maganlal's home and had a further lesson upon the differences of the weights and measures connected with the different counts of spun yarn.

On Tuesday January 20th, at 7-30 a. m. just as we were crossing the road going to our carding lesson we saw three figures coming along the road, and as the centre figure was unquestionably that of Mahatmaji, we walked along to meet the little party and were able to greet them before they entered the compound. Mahatmaji looked well and was in good spirits and asked us to join him in his walk next morning.

In the afternoon we learned how to make a set of double *rachh* and in the evening went to our third lesson with Mr. Maganlal. He showed us what constitutes good spinning, how to make elastic and well twisted yarn and how to get the number of threads to an inch in the different counts of yarn and how it is more economical to spin fine yarn.

At morning prayers, the waning moon shining on the waters of the Sabarmati river was a wonderful sight and two hours later at 6 o'clock, we saw Venus and Jupiter in very close

conjunction, with Mercury above them. We have been watching them draw closer and closer together for many mornings now, it was a very good augur for our coming walk with Mahatmaji.

We went very early to the carding room, did some excellent carding and then returned to our room to await for Mahatmaji's arrival. At 9-30 he came and joyfully we joined him. We had decided that we would rather listen to his talking than talk ourselves, so to gain this end we had written down one or two questions, his answers to which we were very anxious to hear.

We first asked him about his Spinning Franchise, as we wanted to know whether his aim was to raise the depressed classes, or was it to be used to level all classes? He said it was both a levelling up and levelling down; to prevent the exploitation of the depressed classes upon the one hand, and to prevent swelled head upon the other hand. For a man to grow his own food, to make his own wearing apparel from the products of his own land, were just as necessary as breathing the air around him. This is a man's duty, no one should be fed or clothed without having worked towards that end himself. To Mahatmaji this has absolutely universal application as the only way of saving the world, otherwise it will come to an end.

#### MEANS AND ENDS

When we asked him whether spinning and weaving was a means to an end or an end in itself, he said the mankind is only able to utilise means, the ultimate goal is beyond us. As soon as we think we have achieved one end, another arises, so all we are concerned with here are the simple means of life, the primal necessities the rest we may leave in the hands of God. He said to that he did not care in the least for the accessories of life, its necessities alone were his concern. Until everyone was able to gain these for himself, Mahatmaji would not consider his work finished and in this way again his work is not for India alone but for the whole world.

Then we asked him what he thought to be the real function in India of the British and he replied promptly that it was to serve India. Mahatmaji has always been friendly towards the British, but it was not until his return from South Africa to work for the good and the uplifting of India that he found how patronising and obstructive the British could be. He feels that his friendship for them is as great and as true as ever, but he realises the impossibility of any improvement in Indian affairs whilst the British continue in this attitude of patronage and obstruction. When they see that service and not exploitation should be the aim of the British in India, only then will true friendship arise between them, and the harmonious working of the two nations ensue.

When asked if British rule was necessary to protect India, from outside interference he replied "No. But since they are here, my aim shall be to urge them to work with us as friends and equals." He went on to say that the British could give to India resourcefulness, energy and initiative power which are such marked characteristics of our nation, and that these were just the qualities needed to help India to rise from the lethargy into which she has sunk.

As upon the last occasion, we walked as far as the jail gates and back again, and we returned to our room uplifted and ennobled by our contact with this greatest man of the age.

The morning and evening prayers form one of the greatest and most outstanding features of the communal life of the Ashram. All the men, women and children on the compound are gathered together, the stars shining above, the river Sabarmati, silver in the moonlight, the lovely perfumes, the good music, Mahatmaji discipline personified and yet the very embodiment of love: After the *slokas* are read and the singing finished, Mahatmaji gives forth his message which has been translated for us thus :—"I do not want kingdom, salvation or heaven, what I want is to remove the troubles of the oppressed and the poor."

## THE FAREWELL

On Wednesday the 22nd, the waning moon and the three planets again made of the morning sky a picture which will long remain in our minds. Knowing that Mahatmaji was to leave by the morning train for Delhi, we crossed the compound to his Bungalow at 7-30 a. m. We found him sitting on the floor before his desk in his own room. Upon the floor was spread a lovely blue Khaddar cloth, and as the rising sun lighted up the whole place Mahatmaji looked a wonderful figure in these unique yet characteristic surroundings. The room is absolutely devoid of all ornament; a few bookshelves, a low desk, one deck chair which remains folded against the wall, a couple of charkas and a low bench constitute its furniture. Yet no scene of regal splendour could have appealed to us as much as did this bare simplicity of India's great man at home in the humble surroundings in which he chooses to live. Here indeed is a man who practices what he preaches, what Mahatmaji is to the outside world that he is in his own life, the small actions of his life both public and private are true to his ideals.

We talked of his forthcoming journey and he said that he had expected to be away until February 11th, but that the latest news about the Hindu-Muslim friendliness in Kohat might make it possible to return to the Ashram straight from Delhi instead of going further north as he had intended.

Mahatmaji says that when he feels a thing is right and when he is really convinced that it must be, then he goes straight forward with it, never doubting, knowing that if he make a mistake it is an honest one and God will pardon him for it and help him to put it right, but if he is in doubt about a thing he refuses to have anything to do with it. That is of course what makes him irresistible, he is so convinced of the rightness of his cause that others cannot help believing in it too. "I know where I stand and have a strong belief in myself so I go forward fearlessly.

He explained that Gujarat was more suited to take the lead in spinning and weaving than any other province because here

it had been well organised and the result was that there were more people capable of teaching both arts than in any other part of the country. He expects to have to go over to the Madras side in connection with the question of the untouchables for as he put it, "I have to go wherever the people need me."

As we left the room he called out after us, "I shall expect to see you here when I return." And as we went away we felt a great sense of emptiness and loss as we thought how few were the days left to us of this wonderful month.

For indeed when we thought of the whole atmosphere of the place and the ideals for which it stands, the joy of the workers in their work, the happy contented homes, the fine education available to the children, the absence of any anxious thought for the morrow—our hearts ached to think we were to leave it all.

What has struck us most about the Ashram is the music which accompanies all the activities, the rhythmical sound of the carding bow, the humming of the spinning-wheel, the music of the *tambura* and the *sitar* in the class rooms, wherever we turn there is harmony and joy, discipline and devotion.

Here, more than ever before in our busy lives, have we felt the truth of the words "*Laborare est orare*"—to labour is to pray.

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17th July, 1924

### VARNASHRAM OR VARNASANKARA?

BY M. K. GANDHI

A fair friend writes :

"A fellow traveller drew my attention to the message of yours to the Rajput Parishad of Vartej. By reading it, a protest which was laying suppressed in the subconscious level of the mind made its way to the surface and claimed a hearing. Man is one who does *manan* or thinking. So I hope you will be tolerant to a fellow-thinker and give an attentive hearing to

thoughts that may run counter to your habitual ones. These thoughts had occurred at the first sight of the Sabarmati Ashram with its weaving shed in 1920, had disappeared and reappeared off and on, till of late they have been busy building a permanent abode in my mind for which your message to the Rajputs has supplied the straw for the last brick.

In a place where the whole station was lined from one end to the other with volunteers dressed in military style with swords hanging at their sides, where the whole air was redolent with reminiscences of bravery and chivalry of men of the military caste of India, was not your message urging them in a way to substitute the music of your wheel for the music of their sword a preaching of the *dharma* of your caste to all castes *ad absurdum* like the Christian missionary? Should you not rather like the sages of ancient India exhort a Brahman to be a true Brahman, a Kshatriya to be an ideal Kshatriya and a Vaishya to be a model Vaishya? The insignia of the Brahman is the book or pen, of the Kshatriya the sword, and of the Vaishya the wheel or the plough. You may well pride yourself in being called a weaver or an agriculturist as thereby you are true to the natural tendencies of your *jati* or to *Vaishya dharma*. But why would you a Hindu a believer in Varnashram principles help in the degradation of a Brahman or a Kshatriya by insisting on their accepting *Vaishya dharma* and rejecting or neglecting their respective *jati dharmas*? Can a Kshatriya not serve and protect the poor even in these days but in the Vaishya way?

The great men of India have always upheld *swadharma* for each individual temperament. You are the first of them to preach the throwing in of the *dharmas* of all people into the same melting pot and thereby Vaishyaising the whole nation. Uplift the Vaishya by all means but pray do not pull the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas by their legs. Spiritualise your caste people but do not materialise the men of other castes by turning them into spinners and weavers with the spell of your personality. To my thinking a Vinoba and a Balkoba would

I have rendered more potent service to the nation as pure Brahmans with their intellects fully developed rather than as spiritual weavers which you have turned them into."

I have not reproduced the whole of the letter but I have given the cream of it. The rest is a commentary on the extract quoted by me. The friend is born and claims to be a Hindu even as I claim to be one. As I have regarded spinning to be superior to sectional religions, I had hoped that I would not be misunderstood by cultured friends. But it was not to be. The friend tells me she is not the only one to oppose the charkha. I must therefore endeavour patiently to examine the argument. I have noted in the course of my journalistic experience dating from 1904 that most of the criticism received by editors is based upon an imperfect understanding of an opponent's statement. In the case in point if only the friend had borne in mind that I had presented that message of the wheel not to the Hindus alone but to all Indians without exception, to men and women, to Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, Jews, Sikhs and all others who claimed to be Indians, she would have written differently. She would then have inferred that I had placed before the people of India something which not only did not come in conflict with the several religions but which in so far as it was taken up added lustre to one's own religion and in Hinduism to one's own varna or caste. Mine therefore I claim to be a method not of confusion but cleansing. I ask no one to forsake his own hereditary dharma or occupation but I ask every one to add spinning to his natural occupation. The Rajputs of Kathiawad knew this. They asked me whether I wanted them to give up their swords. I told them I wanted them to do no such thing. On the contrary, I added, I wanted each one of them to possess a trusty sword so long as they believed in it. But I certainly told them that my ideal Rajput was he who defended without the sword and who died at his post without killing. A sword may be snatched from one, not so the bravery to die without striking. But this is by the way. For my purpose, it is enough to show that the Rajputs were not

to give up their calling of protecting the weak. Nor do I want the Brahmans to give up their vocation as teachers. I have suggested to them that they become better teachers for sacrificial spinning. Vinoba and Balkoba are better Brahmans for having become spinners and weavers and scavengers. Their knowledge is more digested. A Brahman is one who knows God. Both these fellow-workers are nearer God today by reason of their having felt for and identified themselves through spinning with the starving millions of India. Divine knowledge is not borrowed from books. It has to be realised in one-self. Books are at best an aid, often even a hindrance. A learned Brahman had to learn divine wisdom from a God-fearing butcher.

What is this Varnashrama? It is not a system of watertight compartments. It is a recognition to me of a scientific fact whether we know it or not. A Brahman is not only a teacher. He is only predominantly that. But a Brahman who refuses to labour will be voted down as an idiot. The Rishis of old who lived in the forests cut and fetched wood, tended cattle and even fought. But their pursuit in life was preeminently search after Truth. Similarly a Rajput without learning was good for nothing no matter how well he wielded the sword. And a Vaishya without divine knowledge sufficient for his own growth will be a veritable monster eating into the vitals of society as many modern Vaishyas whether of the East or the West have become. They are, according to the Gita 'incarnations of sin who live only for themselves.' The spinning wheel is designed to wake up every one to a sense of his duty. It enables everyone better to fulfil his *dharma* or duty. When a vessel is running on smooth waters, work on board is exquisitely divided. But when it is caught in the grip of a violent storm and is about to sink, every one has to give a helping hand to the necessary work of life-saving.

Let us also bear in mind that with the rest of the world India finds herself in the deadly coil of the mercantile cobra. It is a nation of shop-keeping soldiers that claims to rule her. It will tax all the resources of all her best Brahmins to unwind



India from that coil. Her learned men and her soldiers will therefore have to bring their learning and their prowess to bear upon the mercantile requirements of India. They must therefore, in order to be able faithfully to carry out their *dharma*, learn and practise spinning.

Nor have I the least hesitation in recommending hand-weaving as a bread-winning occupation to all who are in need of an honest occupation. To the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and others, who are at the present moment not following their hereditary occupation but are engaged in the mad rush for riches, I present the honest and (for them) selfless toil of the weaver and invite them with a view to returning to their respective dharmas to be satisfied with what little the handloom yields to them. Just as eating, drinking, sleeping etc. are common to all castes and all religions, so must spinning be common to all without exception whilst the confusion, selfish greed and resulting pauperism persist. Mine therefore is a method not of making Varnasankara—confusion worse confounded—but it is one of making Varnashram-cleansing more secure.

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*31st July, 1924*

### MORE ABOUT VARNASHRAM

[The fair friend whose letter I reproduced in part in the issue of the 17th with comments complains that I have not done justice to her by giving only part of her letter and omitting that which was inconvenient for my argument, and challenges me to reproduce the whole of the letter. As I had no intention whatever of suppressing any part of her letter for the cause she mentions, I gladly place before the reader the whole of her letter and her comments on my remarks. As I have no desire to enter into any further discussion on the matter I have told her that hers shall be the last say.]

M. K. G.]

A fellow-traveller drew my attention to the message of yours to the Rajput Parishad of Vartej. By reading it, a protest

which was lying suppressed in the sub-conscious level of my mind made its way to the surface and claimed a hearing. Man or *manava* is one who does *mananam* or thinking. So I hope you will be tolerant to a fellow-thinker and give an attentive hearing to thoughts that may run counter to your habitual ones.

These thoughts had occurred at the first sight of the Sabar-mati Ashram with its weaving shed in 1920, had disappeared and reappeared off and on till of late they have been busy building a permanent abode in my mind for which your message to the Rajaputs has supplied the straw for the last brick.

In a place where "the whole station was lined from one end to the other with volunteers dressed in military style with swords hanging at their sides" where the whole air was redolent with reminiscences of bravery and chivalry of men of the military caste of India, was not your message urging them in a way to substitute the music of your wheel for the music of their sword a preaching of the *dharma* of your caste to all castes *ad absurdum* like the Christian missionary? Should you not rather like the sages of ancient India exhort a Brahman to be a true Brahman, a Kshatriya to be an ideal Kshatriya and a Vaishya to be a model Vaishya? The insignia of the Brahman is the book or the pen, of the Kshatriya the sword or the bow, and of the Vaishya the wheel or the plough. You may well pride yourself in being called a weaver or an agriculturist as thereby you are true to the instincts of your *jati dharma* or *Vaishya dharma*. But why would you a Hindu, a believer in Varnashram principles, help in the degradation of a Brahman or a Kshatriya by insisting on their accepting *Vaishya dharma* and rejecting or neglecting their respective *jati dharmas*? Can a Kshatriya not serve and protect the poor even in these days but in the Vaishya way?

As a human being is made up of three component parts, the body, the life and the spirit, so the division of service in ancient human society was three-fold—the Vaishya was to supply the bodily needs of the community by exerting himself bodily—by weaving, by ploughing, by rearing cattle and by

trade and commerce ; the Kshatriya was to preserve the life of the community and help it to live in peace by placing his life always in danger at its service ; and the Brahman was to keep the spirit of the race up to the highest standard of excellence by devoting himself to knowledge pure and simple and leading an exemplary spiritual life. They were the guardians each of the three sheaths of men—the annamaya kosha, the pranamaya kosha and the vijnanamaya kosha respectively. All the castes, including the non-dwija shudra absorbed into the Aryan fold, could be highly moral without giving up their hereditary callings or duties in accordance with temperamental differences. Even in present-day India saints have received their tribute of homage irrespective of their birth. In Madras just as in other parts of India holy men and women of the Panchama class even have received recognition at the hands of Brahman historians.

The *dharmavyadh* or the butcher saint is a well-known character in the Mahabharata which is one of our ancient books of wisdom. When a Brahman Rishi being vain of his spiritual achievements was directed by a woman seer devoted to her husband to go to the butcher and receive instructions in spirituality, the Brahman, though humiliated, followed her advice and sought out the butcher whom he found surpassing all his expectations in spiritual excellence without ever giving up his hereditary duties of selling the flesh of animals. When the Rishi took him to task for it the butcher saint's discourse on *swadharma* became a veritable treat and the Rishi went back wiser than he had come. But the saint never enjoined or enforced his *swadharma* on the Rishi.

The great men of India have always upheld *swadharma* for each individual temperament. You are the first of them to preach the throwing in of the dharmas of all people into the same melting pot and thereby Vaishyaising the whole nation. Uplift the Vaishya by all means but pray do not pull the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas by their legs. Spiritualise your caste people but do not materialise the men of other castes by turning them into spinners and weavers with the spell of your

personality. A Vinoba or a Balkoba would have rendered more potent service to the nation as pure Brahmans with intellects fully developed rather than as spiritual weavers which you have turned them into. If they have acquiesced in their devolution and submitted to your stronger will, rather to the charm of your hypnotic self-absorbing egoism, their insensibility or helplessness is the more pitiable and your responsibility none the less deep. In these days of *varnasankar* you should not make confusion worse confounded, rather pick out types and set them out on the true typical line of culture. Shri Krishna's exhortation to the *sreshthas* to set example to the *itaras* or the common folk is applicable to the *sreshthas* of each caste in relation to the *itaras* of the same caste and not those of another.

Since writing the above I read your 'Acid test' in the *Young India*. There is no doubt that in the present-day India there is a lot of *dharma-sankara* or mixed temperaments. Very few are purely Brahman or purely Kshatriya by nature, all are akin to the best Vaishya. Thus there would be not much of an anomaly in turning a national assembly into a Vaishya Conference only by making every member of the A. I. C. C. a spinner. Even a non-Vaishya by birth who votes for the resolution and thereby retains his seat in the Committee confesses himself a Vaishya at heart. Yet one of your premises that the spinning wheel and the khaddar have been regarded as indispensable for Swaraj is being challenged on all sides by many an aspirant after Swaraj. But you are consistent throughout. Your repetition in this article that you have faith in no other plan but that of spinning agrees with what you wrote to Hakim Ajmal Khan from the jail wherein you mentioned that in the competition between the charkha and literary pursuits the former had triumphed in you, and that with each turn of the spinning wheel you felt you were approaching nearer God. This is a simple and straight-forward confession of the deep seated caste instincts in you. But must you impose it on men of other castes? Should the national assembly be bereft of the counsel and services of men of the Brahman and Kshatriya instincts,

of scholars and soldiers? Must you yoke Pegasus to the luggage cart?"

[To the original letter reproduced above, she adds the following comments on my article. M. K. G.]

1. Mahatmaji begins with the assumption that I am opposed to the charkha and remarks, 'The friend tells me she is not the only one to oppose the charkha.'

I have nowhere in the letter said I am personally opposed to the charkha nor is there anything between the lines to my thinking to excuse such an assumption. Personally I love the charkha without doing homage to it as the symbol of my swadharma. In my broken home my charkha was lying in a broken state. I fished it out of the lumber room and got it fitted up to play with—as I would play with my vina or sitar if I had them in order. My weakened body does not permit me to do more. Like practising progressive pranayama daily according to one's growing strength I turn the wheel for no more than a few minutes at a time for the present. If I could, I would love to make a monthly present of a fixed quantity of yarn to the country for the sake of one who is wearing his life out for popularising it—if for nothing else as a tribute to the force of activity within him which is fighting incessantly to drive the evil spirit of indolence out of the country. I differ from him in his mental out-look which will make a distinct minority also bow to the charkha—a minority that resents with all the strength of its soul the thrusting of the wheel in its hands in thought even as a form of violence.

2. Mahatmaji infers that if I had only borne in mind that he had presented the message of the wheel not to the Hindus alone but to all Indians without exception, to all men and women who claimed to be Indians, I would have written differently. He gives me more grace-marks for assumed failing of memory than I deserve. Bearing fully in mind that his message is for men and women of all denominations I objected and do object still to his pressing the message for the acceptance of the minority above referred to who take it as ill as if offered forbidden food.

In certain parts of India there are Brahman families to whom tradition has handed down an injunction that however much in want they may be they must never take to the occupation of a caste whose insignia is according to them—‘a pair of scales’—i. e., of the Vania or Vaishya. This is only a very concrete method of keeping up before a Brahman’s mind that he should always keep himself at an arm’s length from material associations and temptations. I have no *locus standi* to speak for non-Hindus. But I have not the slightest doubt that there must be a select minority in each non-Hindu sect too which rightly rebels against the very idea of having to serve the nation by turning the wheel—their inner call to self-dedication pointing to quite a different plane. Swadharma is nothing but the science of heredity or the science of natural equipment and tendency in its application to duty and affects Hindus and non-Hindus, Indians and Europeans alike.

3. Mahatmaji assures me he asks no one to forsake his own hereditary dharma or occupation but he asks every one to add spinning to his natural occupation. He would admit, I am sure, if anything is worth doing it is worth doing well, wholeheartedly and with single-mindedness. Hereditary dharma or occupation is a jealous mistress, it demands absolute loyalty and undivided attention to make one an adept in it. Secondary occupations can be taken up only at leisure hours and that too not in all cases. Agricultural lands if allowed to remain fallow after a seasonal crop increase in their productive capacity though there are exceptions which lose in it unless made to bear a minor crop in between. Same with the human soil, natures and capacities differ. The poet Tagore compares his leisure moments to the vacuum in a cup which if stuffed with the clay of politics or commercialism will no longer serve the purpose of a cup.

4. Mahatmaji says the ideal Rajput is he who defends without the sword and dies at his post without killing. In my humble opinion here is a confusion of thoughts. The Rajput is a *species* of the *genus* man. An ideal man is one who resists

not evil, who has attained *brahmanirvana*, is of a homogenous frame of mind towards both good and evil. A Rajaput is one who has specialised himself in physical resistance and an ideal Rajput is one who follows his dharma rightly, i. e., walks along the path of resistance within the bounds of restriction laid down by ancient men of wisdom to make him progress by gradual stages from brutality to humanity and from humanity to divinity. A Rajarshi is a divine Rajput as a Brahmarshi is a divine Brahman—both arrived on the last rung of the ladder from their respective directions.

5. A man with true Brahmanic inspiration within him would rebel against the call to identify himself with the starving millions by being made one of a supply and transport corps to their bodily wants. He will want to enlist his name in the register of generals like Kapila or Buddha or Christ who sought to strike at the root of the four-fold ills that human flesh is heir to and to prepare for it heavenly food leaving to other adhikaris the immediate beneficent work of relieving the pangs of the body. When the national vessel is in the grip of a violent storm of commercialism, *and particularly when so*, the men at the steerage should not be allowed to leave their post.

6. Mahatmaji admits that the vocation of Brahmans is that of teachers. He must also accede that to be a teacher one must be a student. It is the dharma or duty of Brahmans to specialise in knowledge both temporal and spiritual to develop the intellect as well as intuition to their highest capacities in this mortal frame. The Vaishya and the Kshatriya are not to eschew knowledge, it is the bounden duty of each of the dwijas to be students of the Vedas—the store-house of knowledge—but it is for the Brahman alone to specialise in them. Similarly every living human being whether a Brahman, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya, or a Shudra has to perform certain manual and even menial labour, if need be, for sheer existence, but it is only the Vaishya or the Shudra who specialises in them. Yet the butcher-saint referred to in my letter who was fit to teach divine wisdom to a Brahman and had attained this

very wisdom while pursuing his hereditary occupation of selling flesh, did not perceive in it a reason to prevail upon the Brahman to sell flesh or persuade him to accept the creed that by selling flesh alone a man could attain perfection and that there was no other way to the knowledge of God.

7. I have had the joy of studying, I believe, all the Upanishads extant in the original with commentaries as well as in translations, but I cannot recall to my memory a single passage where a *teacher* is shown as tending cattle, chipping wood or fighting. It is always the pupil who does all these things for the teacher. We find the self-same Brahman, who came *samit-pani* with fuel in his hands to offer at the feet of his teacher and tend cattle for him, being in turn sought as teacher by others in the same fashion when he had become a full-fledged Rishi or Seer himself of a particular aspect of God-head and his fame had gone abroad. The teacher would be too pre-occupied in his spiritual research and discourses to find time for manual occupations—not that he could not give his hand to any physical work when the occasion called for it such as the arrival of a guest, the nursing of a sick disciple etc. The humble writer has been the recipient of exquisite attention by physical service of,—besides heads and inmates of other Ashrams including the Satyagrah Ashram for which she cannot be too grateful, of Swami Vivekananda. Like the last supper of Christ the last dinner cooked by the master with his own hands for the guest whom he loved to honour was a thing which his disciple Sister Nivedita could never tire to recall with wonder and love. But suppose Vivekananda made it his daily business to cook and serve, where would have been the time for his great message to the world?

Again in the matter of fighting too the Rishis have never been found to wield arms themselves though they were the teachers of the science. It is their Kshatriya pupils who fought on their behalf for the good of the common-wealth. Even in pre-English days the saint Ramdas inspired Shivaji and



commanded him to rule and resist the Moslem irreligious oppression, but never struck the tyrant himself for the so-called setting of example by the *shrestha* to the *itara*.

8. A Brahman is the teacher *par excellence*, teacher of temporal as well as spiritual matters. Every school-master if he could rise to the consciousness is a potential Brahman. When not teaching, the Brahman should be at working in his laboratory for research spiritual as well as in all the arts and sciences that are necessary appendages of human life—the life of the masses. Like the *ayurved* and the *dhanurved* let the *vastraved* be taken up by the Brahmans as a department of knowledge only to specialise in—not for the object of turning out a few more *vastras* with his own hands to clad the poor with but to teach others how to do so. By non-observance of this difference in the mental gesture towards the same thing what is ennobling to one will be degrading to the other. A Brahman's objective must be always knowledge and nothing else. He has to raise himself by the pursuit of knowledge of things material to knowledge of immortality. I have said in my letter there are very few men who are purely Brahman or purely Kshatriya in spirit in these days, nearly all are but as good as Vaishyas. A Brahman whose natural inclination is for hoarding money and not acquiring knowledge to impart is no better than a common Vaishya. India is teeming with such in the present day. Mahatmaji may very well pull them by the ears and make them sit for hours at the weaving loom for all that I care. I would only entreat him to keep his hands off and exempt those who show distinct signs of typical culture even if they be members of the A. I. C. C. unless he be determined to turn the Congress into a parade ground of modern Vaishya-drill only.

[The following was received by a subsequent post :

M. K. G.]

There has been one omission in my 'comments' which I had better make clear.

In stating that nowhere in the ancient literature we find

Rishis wielding arms though they have been the teachers of them. I omitted purposely the mention of the obvious exception of Dronacharya. For he was not a Rishi in the sense of one living in the forest. He lived in the palace with his pupils, he came to them with the positive unspiritual object of training a pupil who would avenge the insult to him by King Drupad. Vassihita, Vishwamitra and others who tried to lead spiritual lives in the forests initiated their pupils into the secret of human and divine arms without using them themselves.

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14th August, 1924

### SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

BY M. K. GANDHI

[A correspondent to *Navajivan* sends a formidable letter wherein he objects to most of my propositions and generally my way of life. A friend has translated my reply to it for the benefit of the readers of *Young India*. Translation of the letter is not given as the reply itself enables the reader to know the objections. M. K. G.]

Right conduct is not like Euclid's right line. It is like a beautiful tree, not one of whose millions of leaves is like any other. Though therefore they are from one seed and belong to the same tree, there is none of the uniformity of a geometrical figure about any part of a tree. And yet we know that the seed, the branches and the leaves are one and the same. We know too that no geometrical figure can bear comparison with a full-blossomed tree in point of beauty and grandeur.

Therefore where the correspondent sees inconsistency I see neither contradiction nor insanity in my life. It is true that as a man cannot see his back, so can he not see his errors or insanity. But the sages have often likened a man of religion to a lunatic. I therefore hug the belief that I may not be insane and may be truly religious. Which of the two I am in truth can only be decided after my death.

I never asked my audience to substitute the spinning wheel for the rosary. I only suggested that they could go on spinning taking the name of 'Narayana' simultaneously. And whilst to-day the whole country is on fire, I think it behoves us all to fill the buckets of the spinning wheel with the water of yarn, and extinguish the fire with the name of 'Narayana' on our lips.

I want to see the spinning wheel every-where, because I see pauperism every-where. Not until and unless we have fed and clothed the skeletons of India, will religion have any meaning for them. They are living the cattle-life to-day, and we are responsible for it. The spinning wheel is therefore a penance for us. Religion is service of the helpless. God manifests himself to us in the form of the helpless and the stricken. But we in spite of our forehead-marks take no notice of them i.e. of God. God is and is not in the Vedas. He who reads the spirit of the Vedas sees God there-in. He who clings to the letter of the Vedas is a Vedia—a literalist. Narasimha Mehta does indeed sing the praise of the rosary, and the praise is well-merited where it is given. But the same Narasimha has sung:

'Of what avail is the *tilaka* and the *tulsi*, of what avail is the rosary and the muttering of the Name, what avail is the grammatical interpretation of the Veda, what avail is the mastery of the letters? All these are devices to fill the belly and nothing worth without their helping to a realisation of the Para-Brahma.'

The Mussalman does count the beads of his *tasbeeh*, and the Christian of the rosary. But both would think themselves fallen from religion if their *tasbeeh* and rosary prevented them from running to the succour of one who, for instance, was lying stricken with a snake-bite. Mere knowledge of the Vedas cannot make our Brahmans spiritual preceptors. If it did, Max Muller would have become one. The Brahman who has understood the religion of to-day will certainly give Vedic learning a secondary place and propagate the religion of the spinning wheel, relieve the hunger of the millions of his starving

countrymen and only then, and not until then, lose himself in Vedic studies.

I have certainly regarded spinning superior to the practice of denominational religions. But that does not mean that the latter should be given up. I only mean that a *dharma* which has to be observed by the followers of all religions transcends them, and hence I say that a Brahman is a better Brahman, a Mussalman a better Mussalman, a Vaishnava a better Vaishnava, if he turns the wheel in the spirit of service.

I certainly did not repeat the divine word 'Rama', nor count the beads on account of a feeling that my end was near. But I was too weak then to turn the wheel. I do count the rosary when ever it helps me in concentrating on Rama. When however I raise to a pitch of concentration where the rosary is more a hindrance than a help, I drop it. If it was possible for me to turn the wheel in my bed, and if I felt that it would help me in concentrating my mind on God, I would certainly leave the rosary aside and turn the wheel. If I am strong enough to turn the wheel, and I have to make choice between counting beads or turning the wheel, I would certainly decide in favour of the wheel, making it my rosary, so long as I found poverty and starvation stalking the land. I do look forward to a time when even repeating the name of Rama will become a hindrance. When I have realised that Rama transcends even speech, I shall have no need to repeat the name. The spinning wheel, the rosary and the 'Rama-Nam' are all the same to me. They subserve the same end, they teach me the religion of service. I cannot practise ahimsa without practising the religion of service, and I cannot find the truth without practising the religion of ahimsa. And there is no religion other than truth. Truth is Rama, Narayana, Iswara, Khuda, Allah, God.

As Narasimha says, 'The different shapes into which gold is beaten gives rise to different names and forms; but ultimately it is all gold.'

I have nothing to withdraw from what I have said about machines in the *Indian Home Rule*, and a reference will show

that I have included the printing press in the machines. It must be remembered that it is not *Indian Home Rule* depicted in that book that I am placing before India. I am placing before the nation parliamentary i. e. democratic Swaraj. I do not suggest to-day a destruction of all the machines, but I am making the spinning wheel the master-machine. The *Indian Home Rule* depicts an ideal State. The fact that I cannot come up to the ideal condition of things laid down therein is to be attributed to my weakness. I believe that there is no religion greater than ahimsa, and yet I cannot escape the himsa which is inevitably involved in the processes of eating and drinking. The ideal of ahimsa is however ever before me; therefore even in these processes I do endeavour to restrain myself. I am striving every moment to reduce even those functions to a minimum.

What I have said about hospitals is also true. And yet I suppose I shall resort to the few medicines I hold lawful, so long as I retain the least attachment for my body. I went to the hospital as a prisoner, did not run away from it immediately on my release, because I thought it my duty to remain under the care of those who had treated me with courtesy and kindness.

I am however ashamed at the very fact of my illness inasmuch as I believe that a man should never fall ill. It is humiliating for me to take any medicine, and the more so that it was at all necessary to take me to the hospital.

I have never preferred killing a dacoit to winning him over with love. But he who is not equal to that love, who cannot muster all the love that the act demands, has the right to protect his proteges and his property even by killing the dacoit.

It is a gross error to liken the Englishmen to dacoits. The dacoits loot you by sheer violence, the Englishmen do so chiefly by seducing us. There is thus a great difference of method in the two. A liquor-vendor also robs me of my soul by selling his liquor. Should I suggest killing him, or non-co-operating

with him? But if an Englishman brutally assaults you, or a liquor-vendor forcibly tries to pour liquor down your throat, and if you will not win both over by love, then it is open to you to engage them in an armed combat. It would make no difference if the aggressors in the case were one or many, weak or strong.

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*21st August, 1921*

## UNDER CONSCIENCE'S COVER

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent says in effect, "Do you know what you have done by continually harping on conscience. I find youngsters and grown-up people talking utter nonsense under cover of conscience. What is more, youngsters have become impudent and grown-up people unscrupulous; can you not prevent this mischief? If you cannot, please withdraw the word from use and stop the drivel that is being said in the name of that sacred but much abused word. Pray tell us who has a conscience? Do all have it? Do cats have a conscience when they hunt to death poor mice? I have not given the correspondent's question in his own words. I have endeavoured to paraphrase it. In doing so I hope I have done no injustice to him.

I must confess that the charge is not without substance. But he has presented only the dark side. Every virtue has been known to be abused by the wicked. But we do not on that account do away with virtue. We can but erect safeguards against abuse. When people cease to think for themselves and have everything regulated for them, it becomes necessary at times to assert the right of individuals to act in defiance of public opinion or law which is another name for public opinion. When individuals so act, they claim to have acted in obedience to their conscience. I entirely agree with the correspondent that youngsters as a rule must not pretend

to have conscience. It is a quality or state acquired by laborious training. Wilfulness is not conscience. A child has no conscience. The correspondent's cat does not go for the mouse in obedience to the call of conscience. It does so in obedience to its nature. Conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline. Irresponsible youngsters therefore who have never obeyed anything or anybody save their animal instinct have no conscience, nor therefore have all grown-up people. The savages for instance have to all intents and purposes no conscience. Conscience can reside only in a delicately tuned breast. There is no such thing therefore as mass conscience as distinguished from the consciences of individuals. It is safe therefore to say that when a man makes everything a matter of conscience, he is a stranger to it. It is a truthful saying that 'conscience makes cowards of us all.' A conscientious man hesitates to assert himself, he is always humble, never boisterous, always compromising, always ready to listen, ever willing, even anxious, to admit mistakes.

The correspondent is needlessly agitated. What does it matter that fifty thousand people say they act or refrain for conscience's sake? The world has no difficulty in distinguishing between conscience and an arrogant or ignorant assumption of it. Such men would have acted in similar circumstances exactly as they would under cover of conscience. The introduction of conscience into our public life is welcome even if it has taught a few of us to stand up for human dignity and rights in the face of the heaviest odds. These acts will live for ever, whereas those done under shams are like soap-bubbles enjoying a momentary existence.

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*28th August 1924*

### WHAT IS AN IDEAL CITY?

The following rendering of Mr. Gandhi's speech in reply to the address of the Ahmedabad Municipality is given here as being of general interest :

Whilst I thank you for the beautiful address you have presented to me, I am painfully conscious of the fact that as a citizen of Ahmedabad I am utterly underserving of it. In saying so I am not using the language of false or undue modesty. A citizen to deserve an address from the Municipality of his city should have special citizen-service to his credit. And I have none. I do not think it was at all necessary for you to vote this address for the services you have had in mind. But I know that I owe the address to the fact of many of you being my co-workers in another field and to the proverbial generosity of the nation to which you and I are proud to belong.

When in response to the invitation of some friends I fixed my abode in this city some years ago, I thought I should contribute my share in the service of this city, and be worthy of calling myself its citizen. I had not then the privilege of knowing many of you, but I shared my dreams and visions with Dr. Hariprasad whom I often met. I used to tell him of the citizen service I had done in South Africa—service which I am thankful was true service inasmuch as it was silent and of which most of you know nothing—and I concerted measures for improving the sanitation and health of the city. We had intended to form a committee of servants who would visit every nook and corner of the city in order to give the citizens object lessons in cleaning closets and streets and in general conservancy by doing the work ourselves. We had also intended to plan and suggest measures for the expansion of the city by opening suburbs and inviting citizens to go and settle there rather than live in congested areas. Such things we knew could not be satisfactorily done by fresh taxation. We therefore



thought of going with the beggar's bowl to the rich citizens and ask them to donate land in the heart of the city for opening little gardens for the children to play in. We had intended too to think out schemes so as to afford the fullest facility for the education of every child of Ahmedabad. It was also our intention to ensure a supply of pure and cheap milk by municipalising all the city dairies. Mr. Jivanlal Desai even suggested that I should enter the Municipality myself and endeavour to carry out the plans above adumbrated. But the facts willed it otherwise. A huge hurricane blew over the country in the shape of the Rowlatt Bills taking us all within its sweep. It took some lives both innocent and guilty. I had to do penance for my Himalayan miscalculation. The hurricane still persists though in another shape. We are all trying, however inadequately, to stop it. And I at least feel I have not the leisure to work out my schemes. But why should I pretend that I would have succeeded in carrying them out had I entered the Municipality? Why may I assume that none of your previous presidents or none of you thought or are thinking the same things as I? How dare I say that no efforts have been made in this direction? I may only say that my heart weeps to see the misery, the squalour, and the dirt in the streets of Ahmedabad as I pass through them. How can starvation and dirt be allowed to exist in a city of such riches and rich traditions?

But I may not pretend that I should have been able to remove all this, had I entered the Municipality. Possibly humiliation would have been in store for me in that field as it has been in others. It was perhaps well that Providence ordered things otherwise. As it is, however, even to-day I stand in the humiliating position of having no citizen-service to my credit, and yet stealing an address I do not deserve. I pray that the Almighty may have consideration for my good intentions and forgive my failings, I ask you also to forgive me, and request you to have in mind the dream of an ideal city I have revealed to you. I thank you once again.

*13th November, 1924*

## A MORNING WITH GANDHIJI

BY MAHADEV DESAI

Among those who visited Dilkhush, during the weeks of penance and prayer, there was a young student from Santiniketan, named Ramachandran. He is one of the pupils of Mr. Andrews and he had no difficulty in persuading his teacher to permit him to stay at Delhi for some time. On the evening when Mr. Andrews left Delhi, he took Ramachandran upstairs and said to Gandhiji, I have not even introduced Ramachandran as yet to you. But he has been here all the while with us, helping us. He wants to ask you some questions and I shall be so glad if you could have a talk with him before he leaves tomorrow to go back to Santiniketan.' The 'tomorrow' was a silent Monday, and so Ramchandran stayed a day more. On Tuesday morning he had to take his train for Calcutta. Exactly at half past five, after the morning prayer, he was summoned. He had set down his questions,—the doubts and difficulties that tormented him. Yet he could not altogether trust himself at first to be able to ask all that he wanted to. But ultimately he mustered sufficient courage, and he found to his utter surprise that in a moment Bapu's gentle inquiries about him, his place, his studies, had left no room for hesitation or nervousness. It is impossible to reproduce all the conversation that Ramachandran was privileged to have that morning with Gandhiji. I can but present the barest summary.

'How is it,' proceeded Ramachandran, 'that many intelligent and eminent men, who love and admire you, hold that you consciously or unconsciously have ruled out of the scheme of national regeneration all considerations of Art?' 'I am sorry' replied Gandhiji, 'that in this matter I have been generally misunderstood. There are two aspects of things,—the outward and the inward. It is purely a matter of emphasis with me. The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true Art is thus the expression of the soul. The

outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.'

Ramachandran hesitatingly suggested: 'The great artists themselves have declared, that Art is the translation of the urge and unrest in the soul of the artist into words, colours, shapes etc.' 'Yes' said Gandhiji, 'Art of that nature has the greatest possible appeal for me. But I know that many call themselves as artists, and are recognised as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest.'

'Have you any instance in mind?' 'Yes,' said Gandhiji, 'take Oscar Wilde. I can speak of him, as I was in England at the time that he was being much discussed and talked about.'

'I have been told', put in Ramachandran, 'that Oscar Wilde was one of the greatest literary artists of modern times.'

'Yes, that is just my trouble. Wilde saw the highest Art simply in outward forms and therefore succeeded in beautifying immorality. All true Art must help the soul to realise its inner self. In my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realisation. I can claim, therefore, that there is truly sufficient Art in my life, though you might not see what you call works of Art about me. My room may have blank walls; and I may even dispense with the roof, so that I may gaze out upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious Art of man can give me the panoramic scenes that open out before me, when I look up to the sky above with all its shining stars? This, however, does not mean that I refuse to accept the value of productions of Art, generally accepted as such, but only that I personally feel how inadequate these are compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in Nature. These productions of man's Art have their value only so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realisation.'

'But the artists claim to see and to find Truth through outward beauty' said Ramachandran. 'Is it possible to see and find Truth in that way?'

'I would reverse the order,' Gandhiji immediately answered, 'I see and find beauty in Truth or through Truth. All Truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth the ordinary man runs away from and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.'

Ramachandran then asked, 'But cannot Beauty be separated from Truth, and Truth from Beauty?'

'I should want to know exactly what is Beauty' Gandhiji replied. 'If it is what people generally understand by that word, then they are wide apart. Is a woman with fair features necessarily beautiful?' 'Yes' replied Ramachandran without thinking.

'Even' asked Bapu, continuing his question, 'if she may be of an ugly character?'

Ramachandran hesitated. Then he said, 'But her face in that case cannot be beautiful. It will always be the index of the soul within. The true artist with the genius of perception will produce the right expression.'

'But here you are begging the whole question,' Gandhiji replied, 'You now admit that mere outward form may not make a thing beautiful. To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from its exterior, shines with the Truth within the soul. There is then, as I have said, no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other hand, Truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind he was beautiful, because all his life was a striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also!'

'But Bapuji', said Ramachandran eagerly, 'the most beautiful things have often been created by men whose own lives were not beautiful.'

'That' said Gandhiji, 'only means that Truth and Untruth often co-exist ; good and evil are often found together. In an artist also not seldom the right perception of things and the wrong co-exist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life they are also rare in Art.'

All this set Ramachandran thinking hard. 'If only truthful or good things can be beautiful, how can things without a moral quality be beautiful?' he said, half to himself and half aloud. Then he asked the question, 'Is there truth, Bapuji, in things that are neither moral nor immoral in themselves? For instance, 'Is there truth in a sun-set or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night?'

'Indeed' replied Gandhiji, 'these beauties are truthful, in as much as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How also could these be beautiful, but for the Truth that is in the centre of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances, if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything, which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul, is a delusion and a snare ; even, like the body, which often does hinder you in the path of salvation'.

'I am grateful', exclaimed Ramachandran, 'to hear your views on Art, and I understand and accept them. Would it not be well for you to set them down for the benefit of the younger generation in order to guide them aright?'

'That' replied Gandhiji with a smile, 'I could never dream of doing, for the simple reason that it would be an impertinence on my part to hold forth on Art. I am not an art student, though these are my fundamental convictions. I do not speak or write about it, because I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realisation of my own limitations. My

functions are different from the artist's and I should not go out of my way to assume his position.'

Ramachandran now turned to the next question. 'Are you against all machinery, Bapuji?'

'How can I be', he answered, smiling at Ramachandran's naive question, 'when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel itself is a machine; a little tooth-pick is a machine. What I object to, is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour,' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a friction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.'

"Then, Bapuji," said Ramachandran with eagerness, 'you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence to day?'

'I would unhesitatingly say 'yes'; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be the mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery instead of becoming a hindrance will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation.'

Ramachandran said, 'When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.'

'It might have to go' admitted Gandhiji, 'but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of men. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device

itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.'

'But, in that case,' said Ramachandran 'there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.'

'Yes' said Bapu, smiling at Ramchandran's eager opposition. 'But I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalised, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of the greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the conditions of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease, and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed, the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide the spindles; but when the spindle gets wrong every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right.'

Ramachandran was evidently not satisfied with this. He had understood Gandhiji to be against all machinery and he had felt that this was right too. So he wanted to go to the root

of the matter. But it was getting late and he had many more questions to ask. 'Don't mind losing your train', said Gandhiji, smiling. 'I am prepared to satisfy you. You may ask any questions you like this morning, and it won't tire me now in the least.'

The young friend had by no means exhausted his list of questions. The assurance from Gandhiji that he would give him full liberty that morning put him entirely at ease and gathering courage once more he proceeded with the next question which dealt with the institution of marriage.

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*20th November, 1924*

## A MORNING WITH GANDHIJI

BY MAHADEV DESAI

'The third question' said Ramachandram, 'that I would like to ask you is whether you are against the institution of marriage.'

'I shall have to answer this question at some length,' said Bapu, 'The aim of human life is Moksha. As a Hindu, I believe that Moksha is freedom from birth, by breaking the bonds of the flesh, by becoming one with God. Now marriage is a hindrance in the attainment of this supreme object, in as much as it only tightens the bonds of flesh. Celibacy is a great help, in as much as it enables one to lead a life of full surrender to God. What is the object generally understood of marriage, except a repetition of one's own kind? And why need you advocate marriage? It propagates itself. It requires no agency to promote its growth.'

'But must you advocate celibacy and preach it to one and all?'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji.—Ramachandran looked perplexed.—'Then you fear there will be an end of creation? No. The extreme logical result would be not extinction of the human species, but the transference of it to a higher plane.'



'But may not an artist or a poet or a great genius leave a legacy of his genius to posterity through his own children?'

'Certainly not,' said Bapu, with emphasis, 'He will have more disciples than he can ever have children; and through those disciples all his gifts to the world will be handed down in a way that nothing else can do it. It will be the soul's marriage with the spirit; the progeny being the disciple,—a sort of divine procreation. No! You must leave marriage to take care of itself. Repetition and not growth would be the result; for lust has come to play the most important part in marriage.'

'Mr. Andrews' said Ramachandran, 'does not like your emphasis on celibacy.'

'Yes, I know,' said Gandhiji, 'that is the legacy of Protestantism. Protestantism did many good things, but one of its few evils was that it ridiculed celibacy.'

'That' rejoined Ramachandran, 'was because it had to fight the deep abuses in which the clergy of the age had sunk.'

'But all that was not due to any inherent evil of celibacy,' said Bapu, 'It is celibacy that has kept Catholicism green up to the present day.'

Ramachandran's last question was about the much discussed 'Spinning Franchise.' Ramachandran assured Gandhiji, at the outset, that he was a spinner, but had to confess that he, with three friends at Santiniketan, only began spinning after they had heard of the Fast. He also affirmed that he believed in universal spinning. But he could not understand how the Congress could compel its members to spin. Persuasion and not compulsion should be the method.'

'I see,' said Gandhiji, 'you go even farther than Mr. Andrews. He would not have the Congress to compel its members; but he would fain become a member of a voluntary spinning association, with rules about spinning. You object to any such association whatsoever?'

Ramachandran sat silent.

'Well then' replied Gandhiji, enjoying the argument, 'I ask you, has the Congress any right to say that its members shall

not drink? Will that be a restriction of the freedom of the individual too? If the Congress exercised that right of enjoining abstinence from drinking, there would be no objection. Why? Because the evils of drink are obvious. Well, I say that in India today where millions are on the brink of starvation and plunged in utter misery, it is perhaps a much worse evil to import foreign cloth. Think of the starving millions of Orissa. When I went there, I saw the famine-stricken. Thanks to a kind Superintendent, who was in charge of an industrial home, I saw also their children, bright, healthy and merry, working away at their carpets, baskets, etc. There was no spinning, because these other things were much in vogue at the time. But on their faces there was the lustre of joyful work. But when I came to the famine-stricken, what did I see? They were merely skin and bone, only waiting to die. They were then in that condition, because they would under no circumstances work. Even though you had threatened to shoot them, if they refused to work, I am sure they would have preferred to be shot, rather than do any honest work. This aversion from work is a greater evil than drink itself. You can take some work out of a drunkard. A drunkard retains something of a heart. He has intelligence. These starved men, refusing to work, were like mere animals. Now, how can we solve the problem of getting work out of people like this? I see no way except that of universalising spinning. Every yard of foreign cloth, brought into India, is one bit of bread snatched out of the mouths of the starving poor. If you could visualise as I can the supreme need of the hour which is to give India's starving millions a chance to earn their bread with joy and gladness, you would not object to the Spinning Franchise. I take the Congress to be a body of men and women who accept the paramount necessity of spinning. Why should it not ensure the integrity of membership in the body by making it compulsory for every member to spin? And you talk of persuasion! What can be better persuasion than that every member of the Congress spins regularly a certain quantity of yarn every month? How would it be honest for the Congress

members to ask people to spin, when they do not spin themselves ?

Ramachandran replied with great earnestness. But how can you exclude people, who do not spin, from the Congress ? They may be doing valuable service to the nation in other ways.'

'Why not ?' asked Gandhiji, 'What is the reason for the property franchise ? Why is it necessary for a man to pay four annas to be a member ? And why is age considered a necessary qualification ? Would the eight year old violinist prodigy of Italy have the franchise ? John Stuart Mill, however clever he may have been, when he was seven years old, with his knowledge of Greek and Latin, had no franchise at that age. Why were these prodigies excluded ? Some men will have to be excluded under any franchise. No ; today many will not accept my position, but I have faith that the day will come,—it may be after my death,—when men will say that after all what Gandhi said was right.'

It was now seven O'clock and Ramachandran had missed his train. But he had gained what was infinitely more precious. The next morning, before starting, he was fortunate enough to get another talk,—this time a brief one, but one that at last converted him.

'So, Bapuji, Truth is the main thing,' said Ramachandran, resuming the previous day's conversation, 'Beauty and Truth are not separate aspects of the same thing.

'Truth' repeated Gandhiji with greater emphasis, is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist, because he saw and expressed Truth ; and so was Muhammad, the Koran being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature,—at any rate, that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for Truth, that the grace of expression naturally came in ; and yet neither Jesus nor Muhammad wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for and would die for.'

Ramachandran reverted to his difficulties as to Gandhiji's.

logical position with regard to machinery. 'If you make an exception of the Singer Sewing Machine and your spindle,' he said, 'where would these exceptions end?'

Gandhiji replied, 'Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man.'

'But I was not thinking just now of the practical side, Bapuji,' said Ramachandran, 'Ideally would you not rule out all machinery? When you except the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car, etc.?''

'No, I don't,' said Bapu, 'because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man; for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life—a primary need. Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected!'

'Why is it a necessary evil?' asked Ramachandran, 'May not after all some artists be able to see Truth in and through Beauty?'

'Some may,' said Gandhiji, 'but here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions. And to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of Beauty, in such a way as to see Truth in it. Show them Truth first, and they will see Beauty afterwards. Orissa haunts me in my waking hours and in my dreams. Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow.'

Here the long conversation ended, and early the same morning Ramachandran started on his way back to Santiniketan

rich with Bapu's blessings, wondering how far the teaching of his Gurudev, Rabindranath Tagore, would harmonise with that which he had just heard, and how far there was a fundamental difference.

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*26th March, 1925*

### STONING TO DEATH

BY M. K. GANDHI

My brief note on the penalty of stoning to death awarded against certain members of the Ahmadiyya community has resulted in a great deal of correspondence on the subject. I am unable to print all the correspondence. But I am printing enough \* to put the reader in possession of the views of my correspondents.

I am very glad to find that there is no penalty of stoning to death in the Quran. I did not say that there positively was. I said, 'I understand that the stoning method &c. ..' But Maulana Zafar Ali Khan whilst saying that the penalty is not prescribed in the Quran energetically argues that it has nevertheless a place in Islam and gives it his support. To me, an outsider, it is the same thing so long as a particular practice is part of Islamic practice whether it is defended on the basis of 'the practice of the Prophet' or 'the collective judgment of the Islamic world.' What I would like my Mussalman friends to do is unhesitatingly to condemn, irrespective of its source, what the world's reasoned opinion rejects as contrary to humanity. I am glad therefore that Maulana Safdar and Khwaja Kamaluddin condemn the penalty of stoning altogether, and that of death at all, for apostasy. I wish that they could say with me that even if it could be established that the practice of stoning to death could be proved to be derived from the Prophet's practice or 'the collective judgment of the Islamic world,' they could not defend it as

\* Omitted in this collection.

being repugnant to their sense of humanity. I would relieve the Maulana of his anxiety for my 'prestige throughout the Islamic world'. It would not be worth a day's purchase if it could be reduced to a nullity on account of an honest expression of my opinion about practices defended in the name of Islam. But the fact is, I have no desire for prestige anywhere. It is furniture required in courts of Kings. I am a servant of Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis and Jews as I am of Hindus. And a servant is in need of love, not prestige. That is assured to me so long as I remain a faithful servant. And I would ask the Maulana to transfer his anxiety to the prestige of Islam. And I shall share his burden. In my opinion he had unconsciously diminished that prestige by his defence of an indefensible practice. No amount of casuistry can defend the penalty of stoning to death in any event or that of death, whether by stoning or otherwise, for apostacy.

My own position is clear. In my writing about Islam I take the same care of its prestige that I do of Hinduism. I apply the same method of interpretation to it that I apply to Hinduism. I no more defend on the mere ground of authority a single text in the Hindu scriptures than I can defend one from the Quran. Every thing has to submit to the test of reason. Islam appeals to people because it appeals also to reason. And in the long run it will be found that any other method would land one in trouble. There are undoubtedly things in the world which transcend reason. We do not refuse to bring them on the anvil of reason but they will not come themselves. By their very nature they defy reason. Such is the mystery of the Deity. It is not inconsistent with reason, it is beyond it. But the stoning to death is no more beyond reason than, say, the practice of honesty or of swearing. Taken in its broadest sense apostacy means 'abandonment of one's religion.' Is that a grievous crime meriting the punishment of death? If it is, reconversion of a Hindu convert to Islam is a step involving capital punishment. The Maulana Saheb's suggestion that I should not criticise any act in Islam or say anything of the Quran because I am President of the

·Congress and friend of Mussalmans is, I am afraid, unacceptable. I should be unworthy of either position if at a critical moment I suppressed my own judgment. The stoning incident is a matter with which every publicist is concerned. It is a matter of public morality and general humanity which is the basis of all true religions.

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*16th April, 1925*

### OUR UNFORTUNATE SISTERS

BY M. K. GANDHI

·Of all the addresses I received in the South the most touching was one on behalf of the Devadasis—a euphemism for prostitutes. It was prepared and brought by people who belong to the clan from which these unfortunate sisters are drawn. I understood from the deputation that brought the address that reform from within was going on but that the rate of progress was still slow. The gentleman who led the deputation told me that the public in general was apathetic to the reform. The first shock I received was at Coçanada. And I did not mince matters when I spoke to the men of that place. The second was at Barisal where I met a large number of these unfortunate sisters. Whether they be known as Devadasis or by any other name, the problem is the same. It is a matter of bitter shame and sorrow, of deep humiliation, that a number of women have to sell their chastity for man's lust. Man the law-giver will have to pay a dreadful penalty for the degradation he has imposed upon the so-called weaker sex. When woman, freed from man's snares, rises to the full height and rebels against man's legislation and institutions designed by him, her rebellion, no doubt non-violent, will be none the less effective. Let the Indian man ponder over the fate of the thousands of sisters who are destined to a life of shame for his unlawful and immoral indulgence. The pity of it is that the vast majority of the men who visit these pestilential

haunts are married men and therefore commit a double sin. They sin against their wives to whom they have sworn allegiance and they sin against the sisters whose purity they are bound to guard with as much jealousy as that of their own blood sisters. It is an evil which cannot last for a single day, if we men of India realise our own dignity.

If many of the most respectable among us were not steeped in the vice this kind of indulgence would be regarded as a greater crime than the stealing of a banana by a hungry man or the picking of a pocket by a youngster who is in need of money. What is worse and more hurtful to society—to steal property or to steal the honour of a woman? Let me not be told that the public woman is party to the sale of her honour, but not the millionaire on the race-course whose pocket is picked by a professional pickpocket. Who is worse—an urchin who picks a pocket or a scoundrel who drings his victim and then makes him sign away the whole of his property? Does not man by his subtle and unscrupulous ways first rob woman of her noblest instinct and then make her partner in the crime committed against her? Or are some women, like *Panchamas*, born to a life of degradation? I ask every young man married or unmarried to contemplate the implications of what I have written. I cannot write all I have learnt about this social disease, this moral leprosy. Let his imagination fill in the rest and then let him recoil with horror and shame from the sin if he has himself been guilty of it. And let every pure man, wherever he is, do what he can to purify his neighbourhood. I know that the second part is easier written than practised. It is a delicate matter. But for its very delicacy it demands the attention of all thoughtful men. Work among the unfortunate sisters must be left everywhere to experts. My suggestion has reference to work among the visitors to these houses of ill-fame.

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*7th May, 1925*

## VARNASHRAM AGAIN

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :

“ In your recent Madras speech you have restated your faith in the four Varnas. But should the Varnas be strictly hereditary? Some people think that you favour rigid adherence to the hereditary principle ; others that you do not. From a perusal of your writings I am inclined to agree with the former. For instance, what else does your dictum that the ‘untouchables’ should be classed with ‘Shudras’ and that they should enjoy all the rights of ‘Non-Brahmins,’ indicate? Why this constant reiteration of the old arbitrary distinction between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin as if the two belonged to biologically different species? If an ‘untouchable’ can become a ‘Non-Brahmin,’ can he not also become a Brahmin in this very life? Again, if it is possible for an ‘untouchable’ to become a ‘Shudra,’ how is it impossible for a Shudra to become a Vysia, for a Vysia to become a Kshatriya or for a Kshatriya to become a Brahmin in this very life? Why do you hurl the Law of Karma in the face of those who believe it to be possible? Is there a better Brahmin than Sree Narayana Guru Swami, the Ezhava? I know no better Brahmin than Gandhi, the Bania. I know also of hundreds of other ‘Non-Brahmins’ who are better Brahmins (in the best sense of that term) than most birth-Brahmins.

“ If you did not favour strict application of the principle of heredity, you would not seek to prohibit inter-marriages between people of the same race professing the same religion and following the same customs as are several members of the three *Dwija* castes. Nor would you so strenuously oppose inter-dining between, say, Vegetarian Brahmins and vegetarian Non-Brahmins.

“Of course, heredity is a great law of life, but there are even greater laws controlling its mysterious processes. One of them is the law of variation in the phraseology of Evolutionary Biology. Heredity is the *static* and variation is the *dynamic* principle of the universe. The latter it is that holds the key to what we call ‘Progress’ for want of a better name. No social system can ignore the law of heredity with impunity; neither can a social system ignore the law of variation except at its peril. The history of the caste system in India affords enough proof of this. It proves above all that the worst form in which the law of heredity can be applied in any social organisation is to create a *hereditary clergy* to be the sole custodians of its intellectual and spiritual affairs and trustees in perpetuity of its religion.

“Even Babu Bhagwan Das, than whom there is no more orthodox Brahmin and who has done some hard thinking on the subject of social reconstruction in India, conceded some years ago that the hereditary principle in Varnashrama Dharma must be considerably relaxed. It would be, indeed, strange if you of all men championed rigid adherence to it. As a great many people do not know what exactly you think of it all, I hope it will be possible for you to publish this letter with your reply in your esteemed journal.”

I fancy that I have answered all the arguments advanced by the correspondent against Varnashram. But evidently readers have short memories or only those who are concerned for the moment read what is written for them. Thus, for instance, I have often shown the distinction between Varnashram and untouchability. I have defended the one as a rational scientific fact and condemned the other as an excrescence, an unmitigated evil. It may be that my denseness sees a distinction where none exists. It may be, too, that I see science where there is ignorance or superstition. But I do regard Varnashram as a healthy division of work based on birth. The

present ideas of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question with me of superiority or inferiority. It is purely a question of duty. I have indeed stated that Varna is based on birth. But I have also said that it is possible for a Shudra, for instance, to become a Vaishya. But in order to perform the *duty* of a Vaishya he does not need the label of a Vaishya. Swami Narayan Guru does not need to be called a Brahmin in order to enable him to be, what he is reported to be, a Sanskrit scholar. He who performs the duty of a Brahmin will easily become one in the next incarnation. But a translation from one Varna to another in the present incarnation must result in a great deal of fraud. The natural consequence must be the the obliteration Varna. I have seen no reason to justify its destruction. It may be a hindrance to material ambition. I must be excused from applying material considerations to an institution that is based on religious considerations.

Nor is the correspondent happy in his analogy. I have asked that a *Panchama* should be regarded as a Shudra because I hold that there is no warrant for belief in a fifth caste. A *Panchama* does the work of a Shudra and he is therefore naturally classified as such when he ceases to be regarded as a *Panchama*. I do believe that this constant confusion between untouchability and Varnashram and attack on the latter in the same breath as the former retards the progress of reform regarding untouchability.

It is now clear that the law of variation is left untouched by Varnashram. Nay it is provided for. Only, types do not vary in a few years or even in a few generations. There is no fundamental difference between a Brahmin and a Pariah, but he who runs may see that class considered, there is a marked and noticeable difference between Brahmins and Pariahs or for that matter all the four castes. What I would like my correspondent to join me in is a fight against an arrogant assumption of superiority whether it is assumed by Brahmins or others. It is the abuse of Varnashram that should be combated, not the thing itself.

*17th May, 1925*

## COW PROTECTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

Rightly or wrongly, most reluctantly and in fear and trembling I have shouldered the burden of conducting the All-India Cow Protection Organisation that was brought into being at Madhavbag in Bombay on the 28th ultimo.

It is a tremendous task for which I am hardly fitted. I fancy that I know the disease. I know the remedy but I have neither the time nor yet the men who can help me to carry out the ideas that are to govern this institution.

Cow protection to me is not mere protection of the Cow. It means protection of all that lives and is helpless and weak in the world. But for the moment Cow protection means primarily protection of the cow and her progeny from cruelty and slaughter and derivatively all other cattle, *e. g.* the buffalo.

India is the one country in the world where Cow protection is a religious obligation for over twenty crores of her people. And yet the cattle of India are miserable-looking, ill-treated, underfed, over-burdened, deteriorating and are even said to be a burden on the land. Nowhere else on the earth are milch cattle led to the slaughter house because they go dry long before they should. Nowhere else perhaps do cattle give less milk than they cost to feed and keep.

How can this state of things be remedied? Certainly not by multiplying Cow protection societies which do not know their business; most certainly not by fighting the Mussalmans about things which they cannot help even if they would. I do not here take note of those Mussalmans who merely to wound Hindu susceptibility kill cows deliberately and preferably and as it were, in the Hindus' faces. These are exceptional cases. I am thinking of the cattle economics. If we take care of them, the rest will take care of itself. If the cattle are an economic burden and if one cannot set the condition right, nothing

can prevent them from perishing or being salughtered. The problem therefore is to study the question calmly and without sentiment. Religion without the backing of reason and enlightenment is a worthless sentiment which is bound to die of inanition. It is knowledge that ultimately gives salvation. Devotion to the Cow divorced from knowledge is the surest way of imposing premature death on her. Therefore one man with an accurate knowledge of the cattle problem, if he has the heart for the cow, presents in his own person all the Cow protection societies that were and will be ever formed. This All-India organisation is conceived with that end in view—to find out men, chaste, pure, lovers of the Cow and learned who would give their whole time to the work of investigation and administration. I want therefore a secretary whose qualifications I have described in the opening speech reported elsewhere in these pages. A treasurer too has still to be found. Meanwhile a provisional committee and a provisional treasurer and a provisional secretary have been appointed in order to do the preliminary work. The committee is by no means representative of all India. For it was necessary to appoint one from those present. The members of this provisional committee have undertaken during the three months that are to elapse before it meets again, to enlist over twelve hundred members. If the organisation is to be representative it should have members from all the provinces. The provisional secretary is Sjt. Nagindas Amulakhrai of Bombay, (30, Hunuman Building, Homji Street, Circus Road) and the provisional treasurer is Sjt. Rowashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri of Jhaveri Bazar, Bombay. I hope that those who are interested in Cow protection will send in their subscriptions to the secretary or the treasurer. The subscription is Rs. 5 per year payable in advance or two thousand yards of handspun yarn per month.

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*7th May, 1925*

ALL-INDIA COW PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

(In presenting for approval, the draft constitution of the All-India Cow Protection Association to the public meeting held at Madhav Bag, Bombay, on the 28th April, Mr. Gandhi made a speech in Gujarati of which the following is a summary.)

I do not think that I have in my life approached any undertaking with the fear and trembling that I experience today. I am regarded as a man who is generally not afraid of taking risks. I have interested myself in cow protection, almost ever since my child-hood, and have given a careful study to the subject during the past thirty years. I have also occasionally written and spoken about it. And yet I have not felt myself equal to the present undertaking, nor do I feel today. Not that I do not know the way to do it. I do know it. But the successful carrying out takes more than an intellectual understanding of the ways and means. It requires deeper purification and I would have fain added to my modest stock of it before I launched on this new undertaking. But Fates decide my undertakings for me. I never go to seek them. They come to me almost in spite of me. That has been my lot all my life long, in South Africa as well as ever since my return to India. I had not dreamt that the task of forming an All-India Cow Protection Association would fall to me, when I consented to preside over the Cow Protection Conference at Belgaum. But those in charge of it had formulated big plans, and as President I had to consider them. We had a meeting of the committee appointed thereto at Delhi, where a draft constitution was prepared and approved by all present there, including men like Pandit Malaviyaji, Lala Lajpatrai, Swami Shraddhanandji and Dr. Moonje. Even then I was marking time. I waited and watched, before I could decide on taking the final step. But the ever active Chaunde Maharaj would not leave me in peace. I

then proposed that we should get the whole constitution approved and accepted at a public meeting of all interested in cow protection. This meeting then which should have been held in Delhi is held here tonight, more for my convenience than anything else.

The task to which I want your approval and in which I seek your help is immense. It is bigger than perhaps the struggle for Swaraj in as much as it is of an entirely religious character. In my work of a prominently political character, I have often erred and blundered, I have done penance and repaired those errors and blunders. But in the present undertaking an error would be well-nigh irretrievable for the simple reason that the cow we propose to serve is a dumb creature, she cannot complain, she has no voice to raise against what may be against her interests. An untouchable may cry and raise a protest, a Hindu or a Mussalman may raise a protest and even break heads to settle a grievance. But the cow is entirely at our mercy. She consents to be led to slaughter, and to be embarked for Australia and gives her progeny to carry whatever burden we want it to carry, in sun or rain. The task is thus immense and I have undertaken it out of a pure sense of duty.

But I may warn you that there are limits to my capacity for undertakings. There are certain limits which are obvious. For instance though I can collect funds for my purposes, and though I know that the love of my countrymen for me is deep enough to find me money for any good undertaking that I take up, I want you to know that I cannot go about from place to place asking for money for the present task. I have not the time nor the energy for it. Then there is the honest careful and efficient disposal of the funds. I obviously cannot look to or supervise every detail, and the cow won't impale you on her horns for mismanagement or similar blunders. We have therefore to do the work in fear of God and with the full consciousness of the sacredness of the task.

I gave at Belgaum my meaning of cow protection. It includes, as I explained, the protection and service of 'both

man and bird and beast'. It presupposes a thorough eschewal of violence. A Hindu, if he is a true Hindu, may not raise his hand against a Mussalman or an Englishman to protect the cow. I have for our present purposes, confined myself to considering the ways and means of protecting the cow merely. For I know that if we once succeed in the protection of the cow proper, we shall some day be able to serve the cow in all creation. And if we succeed in Bombay we shall also thereafter succeed elsewhere.

But to do so we have to bring both our reason and our heart to bear on the task. We shall have to examine ourselves and realise that it is primarily a Hindu's duty in the matter that this Association seeks to be fulfilled, we have to realise that we have not so much to save the cow from the butcher's knife as from our own. And for that purpose we shall have to grasp the economics of the thing.' Nowhere in the world is the proportion of the bovine to the human population so small as in India. Nowhere is the cow so feeble, and her yield so little as in India. Nowhere is she so badly treated as she is today in India by the Hindus. I am saying this not to excite you. I am stating the barest truth, without the slightest exaggeration. It is the Hindus therefore who have to fulfil their obligations in the matter. The Mussalmans will do their duty after we have done what is obviously ours. I gave all the help that I could for the Khilafat, because I wanted to enlist the Musalman's sympathy in the matter of cow protection. But let us fulfil our obligations first. We are doing nothing today. The little work that is being done by Chaunde Maharaj and others is as a mere drop in the ocean.

Two things I want to invite your attention to as important in the constitution, viz. the establishment of tanneries and dairies. That is too practical, too earthly you will say. But religion which takes no count of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion. That is what the life of the ascetic King Janaka teaches us. And that is why I am putting a religious matter before you in a practical form.



We shall have to take control of the milk supply, and also of the disposal of dead cattle. You are perhaps shocked as I speak of hides and tanneries. But do you know that because we would not take charge of them the untouchable who does the work today excuses himself for eating carrion and remaining unclean. Let us show him the proper way of doing things and he will reform his ways. I am suggesting all these things with the fullest consciousness of the meaning of all that I say. I may tell you that it was I who vowed never more to take cow's or buffalo's milk when I learnt for the first time in South Africa the cruel way in which the last drop of milk was drawn out of them. I know that there are beef-eaters amongst Vaishnavas, I know that there are Vaishnavas who do not hesitate to take Liebeg's 'Extract of Beef', on the pretext that it is prescribed by the doctor. Should we then hesitate to control tanneries in a religious spirit? I tell you we have come to this state because we would not take care of disabled and dead cattle and because we exported them to America.

Let us therefore establish tanneries and look to the proper disposal of dead cattle. Let us establish dairies and ensure a cheaper and better supply of milk. I will not hesitate to seek co-operation of the government in this matter, for I know they have got the services of good dairy experts. If we do these two things then alone is it possible to stop the avoidable slaughter of thousands of cattle annually. The other things in the constitution are of a non-controversial character and explain themselves.

We now want a treasurer and a secretary for our work. The treasurer should be such as everyone trusts, as can collect the necessary funds, and can find them himself when they are not forthcoming. The secretary's first qualification is that he should be a *brahmachari* if possible,—not a mere celibate but a truly religious *brahmachari* who has control over all the senses. He should then have a fair knowledge of the vernaculars and a knowledge of English. He should be an energetic and an active man for he would have to go about from place to place and meet

different people. Failing a *brahmachari*, even a *grihastha* of high character will do. I hope you will approach the task in the proper spirit and I pray that God may give us the strength and the sacrifice needed for it.

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11th June, 1925

### AYURVEDIC SYSTEM

BY M. K. GANDHI

Kaviraj Gananath Sen writes :

‘I take this opportunity of drawing your attention to the fact that the speech you delivered when laying the foundation stone of the Ashtanga Ayurveda Vidyalaya has been greatly misconstrued both by the public and by the Ayurvedic physicians of Calcutta. May I suggest that you will kindly explain that you did not mean to condemn Ayurveda itself or its conscientious votaries but only a certain section of them who lived by fraud? To me such an explanation appears to be urgently required in view of the fact that almost all Bengali papers are misinterpreting your speech and condemning us for not contradicting it.’

I gladly comply with the request, the more so as it enables me to express my views about Ayurvedic medicine.

I must say at the outset that I was reluctant to perform the ceremony referred to as I was reluctant even to perform the ceremony of opening the Tibbi College by reason of the views I hold on Medicine in general as expressed in my booklet *Indian Home Rule*. Seventeen years’ observation has made no material change in them. If I rewrote the book, it is just possible that I should state the views in a different language. But I could no more resist the organisers of my tour than I could a bosom friend like Hakim Saheb. But I told them that my speech might prove embarrassing. Had I been absolutely

hostile to the movement I should of course have declined the honour at any cost. But I could reconcile myself to the performance subject to the conditions I named at the meeting. I hope that the college of which I laid the foundation and to which I understand the founder, himself a Kviraj, has devoted a princely sum, will contribute to the alleviation of real suffering and make discoveries and researches in Ayurveda that will enable the poorest in the land to know and use the simple indigenous drugs and teach people to learn the laws of preventing disease rather than curing them.

My quarrel with the medical profession in general is that it ignores the soul altogether and strains at nothing in seeking merely to repair such a fragile instrument as the body. Thus ignoring the soul, the profession puts men at its mercy and contributes to the diminution of human dignity and self-control. I note with thankfulness that in the West a school of thought is rising slowly but surely which takes count of the soul in trying to repair a diseased body and which, therefore, relies less on drugs and more on nature as a powerful healing agent. My quarrel with the professors of Ayurvedic system is that many of them, if not indeed a vast majority of them, are mere quacks pretending to know much more than they actually do, arrogating to themselves an infallibility and ability to cure all diseases. These gentlemen have no humility in them. They will not study the Ayurvedic system and wrest from it the secrets which appear at present to be completely hidden from the world. They impute to Ayurveda an omnipotence which it does not possess, and in so doing they have made it a stagnant system instead of a gloriously progressive science. I know of not a single discovery or invention of any importance on the part of Ayurvedic physicians as against a brilliant array of discoveries and inventions which Western physicians and surgeons boast. In fact, Ayurvedic physicians' diagnosis as a rule consists in feeling the pulse which I have known many to claim, enables them to know even whether the patient is suffering from appendicitis. Whether the science of the pulse

ever enabled ancient physicians to diagnose every known disease, no one can tell. But it is certain that the claim cannot be sustained at the present moment. The only thing Ayurvedic physicians can safely claim is a knowledge of some vegetable and metallic drugs of great potency which some of them succeed in administering for disease they only guess and therefore often with much harm to their poor patients. The advertisements of medicines that excite animal passions and immorality to incapacity and make those who resort to these practices a real danger to society.

I know of no association of Ayurvedic physicians that protests against or endeavours to check this ceaseless flow of immorality which is sapping Indian manhood and making of many old men monsters living merely to satisfy their lust. Indeed, I have known such physicians enjoying a status of respectability in medical society. Whenever, therefore, I get an opportunity I seize it to drive the truth home to the physicians Ayurvedic and Unani and plead for truth, humility and patient research. I am a lover of all that is ancient and noble. I believe that there was a time when Ayurvedic and Unani medicine served a noble purpose and was progressive. There was a time when I actively helped these physicians and believed in them. But experience has undeceived me. I have been grieved to find arrogance and ignorance among many such physicians. It hurts me to find a noble profession being prostituted for making money. I have written this not to condemn individuals. I have merely reduced to writing the impression that has been left on my mind by a long course of observation of the practice of Ayurvedic physicians. It is no answer to say, as has been said, that Ayurvedic physicians have copied the evils I have named from their Western brethren. A wise man copies not what is bad but that which is good. Let our Kavirajis, Vaidyas and Hakims apply to their calling a scientific spirit that Western physicians show, let them copy the latter's humility, let them reduce themselves to poverty in investigating the indigenous drugs and let them frankly

acknowledge and assimilate that part of Western medicine which they at present do not possess. Let them shun the irreligion of the Western scientists, which, in order to heal the body and in the name of science, subject the lower animal kingdom to the hideous tortures which pass muster under the name of vivisection. Some will retort that there is warrant for vivisection in Ayurveda. If there is, I am sorry. No warrant even in the four Vedas can sanctify sacrilege.

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18th June, 1925

## A DOMESTIC CHAPTER

BY M. K. GANDHI

A vakil from Lyallpur sends the following letter addressed to the Editor, *Young India* :

“ About three or four years ago, a company ‘ All-India Stores Ltd.’ was started at Calcutta with Mr. H. M. Gandhi, son of our Mahatmaji, as one of the directors, as advertised by a representative of the said company at Rawalpindi. A client of mine was persuaded to pay certain sums to the said representative and also to the company in pursuance of his having been so persuaded to become a shareholder. I have written to the known and notified address, 22 Amratalla Street, Calcutta, of the company and so has my client. My client fears that perhaps it was a bogus affair and he has been done out of his money. In the interests of your (Mahatma’s) good name and the economic welfare of this poor country, I fondly hope and wish and even pray, my client’s fears may be unfounded. The post office has returned all our letters back through the Dead Letter Office. So some ground at least exists for my client suspecting that the company is no more. Is it a fact that Mahatmaji’s son was a Director

in it, and is it a fact that such a company came into being and is still existing, and where ?

Please excuse my writing to you about it. My client who is a Mohamedan gentleman and whose respect for Mahatmaji led him to become a shareholder in the company, wants to verify these facts. Hence the query."

But for some important principles involved in the letter, I would have satisfied myself with a private reply, though the letter is meant for publication. It was necessary to publish it also because it is highly likely that many shareholders feel like the vakil's client. They too should have such satisfaction as I could render to them. I do indeed happen to be the father of Harilal M. Gandhi. He is my eldest boy, is over 36 years old and is father of four children the eldest being 19 years old. His ideals and mine having been discovered over fifteen years ago to be different, he has been living separately from me and since 1915 has not been supported by or through me. It has been my invariable rule to regard my boys as my friends and equals as soon as they completed their sixteen years. The tremendous changes that my outer life has undergone from time to time were bound to leave their impress on my immediate surroundings,—especially on my children. Harilal who was witness to all the changes, being old enough to understand them, was naturally influenced by the western veneer that my life at one time did have. His commercial undertakings were totally independent of me. Could I have influenced him, he would have been found associated with me in my several public activities and earning at the same time a decent livelihood. But he chose, as he had every right to do, a different and independent path. He was and is still ambitious. He wants to become rich and that too, easily. Possibly he has a grievance against me that when it was open to me to do so, I did not equip him and my other children for careers that lead to wealth and fame that wealth brings. He started the Stores in question without any the least assistance of any kind whatsoever from me. I did not lend my name to them. I never recommended

his enterprise to anybody either privately or openly. Those who helped him did so on the merits of the enterprise. No doubt his sonship must have helped him. As long as the world lasts, and in spite of his protests against *Varnashram*, it will give credit to heredity. Being my son, he must be good and straight, cautious in his pecuniary affairs and as reliable as his father. So must many have argued. They have my sympathy, but beyond that nothing more. I must disclaim all responsibility, moral or otherwise, for the doings of even those who are nearest and dearest to me except those wherein they act with me or I permit them to act in my name or with my certificate. I have enough to be responsible for myself. I alone know my sorrows and my troubles in the course of the eternal duel going on within me and which admits of no truce.

ask the reader to believe me when I say that it taxes all my energy, and if I feel as a rule stronger for the combat, it is only because I remain wide awake. I make the reader a present of the thought that even my Swaraj activity has a bearing on that duel. It is for the supreme satisfaction of my soul that I engage in it. 'This is selfishness double distilled' said a friend once to me. I quickly agreed with him.

I do not know Harilal's affairs. He meets me occasionally, but I never pry into his affairs. I do not know that he is a Director in his Company. I do not know how his affairs stand at present, except that they are in a bad way. If he is honest, limited or unlimited though his Stores were, he will not rest till he has paid all the creditors in full. That is my view of honest trade. But he may hold different views and seek shelter under the law of insolvency. Sufficient for me to assure the public that nothing crooked will have countenance from me. For me, the law of Satyagraha, the law of love, is an eternal principle. I co-operate with all that is good. I desire to non-co-operate with all that is evil,—whether it is associated with my wife, son or myself. I have no desire to shield any of the two. I would like the world to know the whole of the evil in us. And in so far as I can, with decency, I let the world

into all the domestic secrets so-called. I never make the slightest attempt to hide them, for I know that concealment can only hurt us.

There is much in Harilal's life that I dislike. He knows that. But I love him in spite of his faults. The bosom of a father will take him in as soon as he seeks entrance. For the present, he has shut the door against himself. He must still wander in the wilderness. The protection of a human father has its decided limitations. That of the Divine Father is ever open to him. Let him seek it and he will find it.

Let the vakil and his client know that my good name is not worth keeping, if it suffers because of the errors of a grown up boy who has no encouragement from me in them. 'The economic welfare of this poor country' will be fairly safe in spite of failures of private firms, if the President for the time being of the Congress and the members of the various organisations remain true to their trust and never mishandle a single pice. I pity the client who, out of respect for me, became a shareholder in a concern whose constitution he evidently never cared to study. Let the client's example be a warning against people being guided by big names in their transactions. Men may be good, not necessarily their children. Men may be good in some respects, not necessarily, therefore, in all. A man who is an authority on one matter is not therefore an authority on all matters. *Cavat emptor.*

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25th June, 1925

CHITTA RANJAN DAS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A gaint among men has fallen. Bengal is like a widow to-day. A critic of the Deshabandhu remarked to me some weeks ago, 'I find fault with him, it is true, but must candidly confess to you that we have absolutely no one to replace him.' When I related the anecdote at the meeting at Khulna where I first heard the stunning news Acharya Roy exclaimed, 'It is but too true.



If I could tell who can take Rabindranath's place as a poet, I could tell you who can take Deshabandhu's as a leader. There is no man in Bengal even anywhere near Deshabandhu.' He was a hero of a hundred battles. He was generous to a fault. Though he earned lacs of rupees from his practice, he never permitted himself to be rich. And even gave up the mansion he had.

I came to know him personally for the first time in 1919 in connection with the Punjab Congress Inquiry Committee. I approached our meeting with suspicion and awe. I had heard from a distance of his roaring practice and his still more roaring eloquence. He had come with his motor car and with his wife and family and was living like a prince. My first experience was none too happy. We had met to consider the question of leading evidence before the Hunter Inquiry. I found in him all the legal subtleties and a lawyer's keen desire to 'floor' witnesses by cross-examination and to expose the many wickednesses of the Martial Law administration. My own purpose was to do something different. I reasoned. The second interview put me at rest and dispelled all my fears. He was all reasonableness and gave a willing ear to all I said. It was my first intimate contact with so many public men in India. We knew one another from a distance. I had taken practically no part in Congress affairs. They merely knew me as a South African warrior. But all my colleagues at once made me feel at home with them, none more so than this illustrious servant of India. I was supposed to be the Chairman of the Committee. 'I shall say my say on points wherein we may differ, but I give you my assurance that I shall yield to your judgment.' We had come near enough, before this assurance was volunteered, to embolden me to discover my previous suspicions to him. So when he gave the assurance I felt proud of a comrade so loyal but at the same time I felt a little humiliated; because I knew that I was a mere novice in Indian politics and hardly entitled to such implicit trust. But discipline knows no rank. A king who knows its value submits to his page in matters where he appoints him as the

sole judge. I occupied a place analogous to that of the page. And I record it with grateful pride that among all the loyal colleagues I had the privilege of being associated with, none was more loyal than Chitta Ranjan Das.

At the Amritsar Congress I could no longer claim the rights of discipline. There we were warriors, each holding in trust the welfare of the nation according to his ability. Here there was to be no yielding but to pure reason or party exigencies. It was a perfect treat for me to put up my first fight on a Congress platform. All courteous, all equally unyielding; the great Malviyaji trying to hold the balance evenly, now pleading with one and now with the other. The President of the Congress, Pandit Motilalji, thought the game was all over. I had a rare time between Lokamanya and Deshabandhu. They had a common formula for the Reforms resolution. Each party wanted to convince the other. But there was no conviction. There was a stalemate and a tragedy behind as many thought. The Ali Brothers whom I knew and loved, but did not know as I do now pleaded with me for Deshabandhu's resolution. 'You must not undo' said Mahomed Ali with his persuasive humility, 'the great work you have done in the inquiry.' But I was unconvinced. Jairamdas, that cool-headed Sindhi came to the rescue. He passed me a slip containing his suggestion and pleading for a compromise. I hardly knew him. Something in his eyes and face captivated me. I read the suggestion. It was good. I passed it on to Deshabandhu, 'Yes, if my party will accept it' was his reply. Mark the loyalty again! He must placate his party,—one secret of his wonderful hold on his people. It passed muster. Lokamanya with his eagle eyes was watching what was transpiring. Pandit Malviyaji's Gangetic stream was pouring from the rostrum—his one eye looking towards the dais where we manikins were deciding a nation's fate. Lokamanya said, 'I don't want to see it, if Das has approved, it is good enough for me.' Malviyaji overheard it, snatched the paper from my hands and amid deafening cheers announced that a compromise had been arrived at. I have given a detailed description of the incident

because it epitomises the reasons of Deshabandhu's greatness and unquestioned leadership, firmness in action, reasonableness in judgment and loyalty to party.

I must pass on. We came to Juhu, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Darjeeling. At Juhu he and Motilalji came to convert me. They had become twins. We had different view points. But they could not brook any difference with me. Could they do so they would go fifty miles if I wanted them to go only twenty five. But they would not surrender an inch even to the dearest friend where the country's interest was at stake. We had a kind of compromise. We were unsatisfied, but not in despair. We were out to conquer one another. We met at Ahmedabad. Deshabandhu was in his element, watching every thing as a tactician would. He gave me a splendid defeat. How many such defeats I would not have at the hands of friends like him now alas! no more in body. Let no one consider that we had become enemies because of the Saha resolution. We believed each the other to be in the wrong. But it was a difference between lovers. Let faithful husbands and wives recall scenes of their sacred differences and in their differences giving themselves pain in order to heighten the pleasure of a re-union. Such was our condition. So we must meet again at Delhi, the polished Pandit with his terrible jaws, the 'docile Das in spite of the exterior which to a passing on-looker might appear rough. The skeleton of the pact was made and approved there. It was an indissoluble bond which one party has now sealed with death.

I must postpone Darjeeling for the time being. He used often to claim spirituality and used to say that he had no differences with me in religion. But though he never said it, he probably implied that I was too unpoetic to see the fundamental identity of our belief. I own that he was right. He demonstrated during those precious five days in every act of his that he was deeply religious. That he was not merely great but he was good and growing in goodness. But I must reserve a description of the precious experiences of those five days for a later day. I felt forlorn when cruel fate snatched away Lokamanya

from us. I have not yet got over the shock, for I am yet wooing his dearly beloved disciples. But Deshabandhu's withdrawal leaves me in a worse plight. For when Lokamanya left us the country was full of hopes. Hindus and Musalmans appeared to be united for ever. We were on the eve of battle. Now?

20th June 1925.

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*25th June. 1925*

## FALLEN SISTERS

BY M. K. GANDHI

At Madaripur the reception committee had arranged a spinning demonstration by the fallen sisters. I felt pleased at the sight but I drew the attention of the organisers to the dangers attendant upon handling the question. But at Barisal where the movement for their reclamation first took definite shape, in stead of its having taken a healthy course, the appearance of it was decidedly ugly. These unfortunate sisters have been organised there. A misleading name has been given to the organisation. Its 'present aims and objects' are stated as follows :

- "1. To help the poor and nurse the sick brothers and sisters.
2. (a) To spread education amongst themselves;  
(b) To promote spinning, weaving, tailoring, needle-works and other handicrafts, by establishing a *Nari Silpasram*;  
(c) To give higher musical training.
3. To join with all other institutions, which have Satyagraha and non-violence as their creed."

To say the least, this is putting the cart before the horse. These sisters are advised to do humanitarian work before reforming themselves. The idea of giving higher musical training will be accounted as extremely funny if it was not

tragic in its consequence. For let it be understood these women do know how to dance and sing. And they may join all organisations which have Satyagraha and non-violence as their creed all the time they are, by their trade, doing violence to truth and non-violence!

The document before me says further that they have been enrolled as Congress members and have also been allowed to 'do other national work befitting their humble position.' They have been even elected as delegates. I have seen what I regard as an obscene manifesto written in their name.

Whatever be the motives, I cannot but regard the whole of this development as disgraceful. I appreciate spinning, but it must not be used as a passport to vice. I like everybody to subscribe to Satyagraha but I would prevent by all the power at my command an unrepentant professional murderer from signing the creed. My whole heart is with these sisters. But I am unable to identify myself with the methods adopted at Barisal. These sisters have acquired a status which for the sake of the moral well-being of society they must not have. We will not incorporate an association of known-thieves for the purpose for which these woman have formed their association. There is less warrant for this association, for these are more dangerous than thieves. The latter steal material possessions, the former steal virtue. Whilst man is primarily responsible for the existence of these unfortunate members of society, it must not be forgotten that they have acquired tremendously dangerous powers for mischief. I was told in Barisal that the corporate activity of these women had made them unhealthily forward and that they were already producing a corrupt influence upon the Barisal youths. I wish that the association could be disbanded. I am firmly of opinion that so long as they continue the life of shame, it is wrong to accept donations or services from them or to elect them as delegates or to encourage them to become members of the Congress. There is no legal bar against their entry into the Congress but I had hoped that public opinion would keep them

off the Congress and that they themselves would have the modesty to refrain from seeking Congress membership.

I wish that my words could reach them. I would urge them to withdraw their names from the Congress, forget that they had an association, but quickly and resolutely give up their immoral trade. Then and not till then, they may take up spinning as discipline, and weaving or any other remunerative and clean occupation for a living.

### THREE QUESTIONS

A gentleman sent me the following three questions for answer at Barisal :

1. " Are our fallen sisters entitled to be returned as delegates to the district and provincial conferences or the like representative bodies ? If not, how could such delegates be sent from Barisal to the conferences at Perojpur and Jessore ? "

Under the present constitution of the Congress, even a moral leper *is entitled* to be returned as a delegate, if he can find electors to elect him. But I should not think much of electors who would elect ' fallen sisters ' knowing them to be such and whilst they are carrying on their sinful trade. I know nothing of the conferences mentioned.

2. " If any individual person or an organised body misappropriates Congress funds or refuses to make over the papers and account-books along with the funds and other properties of the District Congress committee to the newly elected executive committee duly approved by the B. P. C. C., what steps should be taken to realise the funds and get back the Congress properties ? "

Although I am still a confirmed non-co-operator, I should have no hesitation, if my entreaty failed, in taking legal proceedings, civil or criminal, against the wrong-doer even though he may be my own father or son. The Congress constitution and resolutions are not designed to defeat the Congress end.

3. " How do you account for the fact that Indians

and Europeans not excluding high Government officials, that were and still are opposed to the noble cause you espouse and did not join the functions you attended (except to hinder them) during your last Bengal tour are so very enthusiastic this time over your reception? Is there any reason to believe that these people have since been imbued with the noble spirit of non-violent non-cooperation or does it prove that your power as the greatest political leader of India is on the wane, if not altogether extinct?"

I am not aware of the hindrances the Government offered during my last Bengal tour but the correspondent is entitled to draw the inference, if during the present tour the authorities are enthusiastic about my receptions, now, that 'my power as the greatest political leader of India is on the wane, if it is not altogether extinct'. But I hope the correspondent will not make the mistake that the authorities, according to him, seem to be making. For the power of a civil resister is like that of the fabled bird that has the capacity of rising from its own ashes.

M. K. G.

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2nd July, 1925

### A STRING OF QUESTIONS

BY M. K. GANDHI

I. In the account of your interview with some gentlemen belonging to the untouchable class at Faridpur published in the issue of the *Young India* dated 14th May 1925, you have asked them to do things by way of self-purification. Now what do you think by self-purification? What are the outer manifestations of self-purification? Does the self-purification consist in *kayik*, *manasik* and *vachanik* purification or one of them alone?

Self-purification means cleansing oneself of all impurities whether of the mind, speech or body. The 'untouchable' friends were asked to think no evil, speak no untruth or abuse

and to keep the body pure by careful wash, pure food and avoidance of carrion or other impure food or intoxicating liquors or drugs.

2. If any class or individual attains that standard can they or he be treated as untouchable ?

Even if a person does not attain the standard and it is unattainable at once by most of us, he may not be regarded as an untouchable. It will go hard with us if that standard was applied to us.

3. There is no unity in food, drink or worship among all the Hindu classes. What do you think to be the first step to bring about that unity ?

I am doing nothing to achieve such unity. Unity I hanker after is one of heart. It transcends these barriers and can subsist in spite of them. We worship the same God under diverse forms and names.

4. It is suggested that if entrance into public places of worship and confectionary shops be opened to sanitary cleaned Hindus, that will be the first step to bring about unity. What is your opinion about it ?

Places of public worship should be open to all who obey the laws of common decency. Who shall judge the standard of cleanliness in dress ? These things are regulated not by law but by public opinion. A confectioner, if he is himself clean, would undoubtedly refuse to sell to those who are dirty. If he did not, he would lose his custom. But a confectioner who refuses to sell to an 'untouchable' because he is so-called, forfeits his right to carry on his business.

5. Your sense of untouchability is a difficult one. Even among higher class Hindus, they do not drink water and eat cooked food from the hands of their *asanskrit* children. Do you call this untouchability ?

I do not call that untouchability. I have explained scores of times that there is no such thing as a fifth *varna* in Hinduism. The untouchable, therefore, should have all the rights common to the four *varnas*.



6. Some suggest that instead of putting too much stress on the drinking of water, it is better to try to remove sense of superiority and inferiority from the heart of higher caste Hindus and increase mutual love and help. Do you approve of this suggestion?

I do approve of the suggestion where it is not made to cover hypocrisy. You shall judge a tree by its fruit. I never lay stress on drinking and eating. But I do and would when a man refuses to drink at the hands of an untouchable because he is so-called. For, then, the refusal is sign of arrogation of superiority.

7. To that end spread of Vaishnava teachings by religious *kirtana* and religious feasting in a body irrespective of creed and caste is an easy and simple method. This method has been in vogue for more than four centuries. What is your opinion about this suggestion?

I have not studied the effect of these *kirtans*. But I would welcome any good method that will break down the wall of insolent superiority.

8. It is almost admitted that the Hindus of Bengal are a dying race. What do you think to be the principal causes of this gradual decay? What are the preventives of this decay? It is also admitted that there has been physical deterioration among the Hindus in height, strength and vitality. How to revive them?

I have seen the statements but I have seen no proof of Hindu deterioration. I should, however, believe the assertion that we are becoming physically weaker. The reasons are obvious. Our growing poverty and early marriages are two substantial causes for the decay. The one can be remedied by the Charkha and the other by individuals resolutely refusing to marry their children, whether male or female, till they are over sixteen and nearer twenty. The later the better. I would run almost every imaginable risk and postpone marriage, till a boy or girl is well advanced and is capable of shouldering the burden and is perfectly healthy. The way to do it is for those who

feel the necessity of reform to initiate it themselves and advocate it among their neighbours. Those who desire the reform and would minimise chances of risk must bring up their children in healthier and purer surroundings than they have at present.

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*2nd July, 1925*

MY INCAPACITY

BY M. K. GANDHI

It would be most comfortable for my pride, if I could give every applicant for help the satisfaction he may desire. But here is a sample of my hopeless incapacity. 'Of what use is your leadership or Mahatmaship if you cannot stop cow-killing by asking the Mussalmans to stop it? Look at your studied silence on the Alwar atrocities and your criminal silence about the affront put by the Nizam upon Panditji whom you delight to call your respected elder brother and one of the first among the public servants and whom you have yourself acquitted of any malice against Mussalmans.' Thus have argued not the same but several persons. The first rebuke mentioned was the last to be received and it has proved the proverbial last straw. There is a telegram before me asking me to request the Mussalmans not to kill cows as sacrifice on *Bakr-id*. I thought it was time for me at least to offer an explanation over my silence. I was prepared to live down the charge regarding Panditji although it was a charge brought by a dear friend. He was almost apprehensive about my fame. He thought I would be accused of fear of Mussalmans and what not. But I was firm in my resolve not to take any public notice of the ban on Panditji. There was no fear of his misunderstanding me. And I knew that he stood in no need of my protection. He will survive all the bans that can be declared against him by any temporal power. His philosophy is his stay. I have watched him at close quarters amid many a crisis. He has stood unmoved. He knows his work and prosecutes it without elation

or perturbation in fair weather or foul. I, therefore, laughed to my heart's content when I heard of the ban. Strange are the ways of potentates. Nothing that I could write in the pages of *Young India* would, I knew, induce H. E. H. the Nizam to recall his fiat. If I had the honour of a personal acquaintance, I would have straightway written to the ruler of Hyderabad respectfully telling him that the ban on Panditji could do no good to his State, much less to Islam. I would have even advised him to offer Panditji his hospitality when he went to Hyderabad and could have cited such examples from the lives of the Prophet and his companions. But I do not possess that honour. And I knew that a public reference by me might not even reach his ears. Save, therefore, for adding to the acerbity already existing, it could have served no purpose. And as I could not add to it, even if I could not diminish it, I chose to be silent. And my present reference I propose to use for the sake of advising such Hindus as would listen to me not to feel irritated over the incident nor to make it a cause of complaint against Islam or Mussalmans. It is not the Mussalman in the Nizam that is responsible for the ban. Arbitrary procedure is an attribute of autocracy whether it be Hindu or Mussalman. We must devise means of checking autocratic vagaries without seeking to destroy the Indian States. The remedy is cultivation of enlightened and forceful public opinion. The process must begin, as it has begun, in British India proper ; because it is naturally freer being administered directly, unlike the States which are administered through the vassals of the Emperor. They, therefore, reproduce the evils of the British system without containing the few safeguards that direct British administration provides for its own sake. In the States India, therefore, orderliness depends more upon the personal character and whims of the chiefs for the time being than upon the constitution or rather the constitutions under which the States government is regulated. It follows, therefore, that real reform of the States can only come when the chilling control of the British Imperial system is at least tempered by the freedom of

British India secured by the disciplined power of the people. Not that, therefore, all the journals have to observe silence. Reference to abuses in the States is undoubtedly a necessary part of journalism, and it is a means of creating public opinion. Only, my scope is strictly limited. I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of Satyagraha which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth. I am anxious, indeed I am impatient, to demonstrate that there is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of non-violence. It is a solvent strong enough to melt the stoniest heart. To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds. The reader sees the pages of *Young India* fairly well-dressed-up and sometimes with Romain Rolland, he is inclined to say 'what a fine old man this must be'. Well, let the world understand that the fineness is carefully and prayerfully cultivated. And if it has proved acceptable to some whose opinion I cherish, let the reader understand that when that fineness has become perfectly natural, *i. e.* when I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then and not till then, my non-violence will move all the hearts of all the world. I have placed before me and the reader no impossible ideal or ordeal. It is man's prerogative and birth-right. We have lost the paradise only to regain it. If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time-circle. The Divine Teacher of the Gita knew when he said that millions of our days are equal to only a day of Brahma. Let us not, there-

fore, be impatient and in our weakness think that non-violence is a sign of soft brains. It is not.

But I must hasten to the end. The reader knows now why I have been silent about Alwar. I have no data to go upon. Alwar can laugh with as much disdain as the Nizam at anything I may say or write. If all the reports that are published are true, they are proof of Dyerism double distilled. But I know that I have for the moment no remedy. I watch with admiration the effort of the press to secure at least a decent public inquiry into the awful allegations. I note the silent movement of Panditji's diplomacy cutting its gentle way. Why need I bother then? Let those who appeal to me for prescriptions know that I am not an infallible Kavaraj with an inexhaustible pharmacopoeia. I am a humble, groping specialist with hardly two indistinguishable drugs in my little pocket. The specialist pleads present incapacity to deal with the evils complained of.

And to the lovers of the cow, have I not already said that I no longer profess, as I did only a short time ago, to claim any influence over Hindus or Mussalmans? Till I have regained it *Gomata* will forgive her humble child that I claim to be. My life is wound up with hers. She knows I am incapable of betraying her. But she understands my incapacity if her other adorers do not.

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*9th July, 1925*

### PAINFULLY ILLUMINATING

BY M. K. GANDHI

"As you are now making a tour over many of the towns and rural areas of Bengal, I avail myself of the opportunity to draw your kind notice to a very dark side of the Bengal social life with the fervent hope that a word of advice and an appeal from you will have a great salutary effect. I have not the slightest desire to cast aspersion on any particular community,

caste or sect. My only intention is to draw your kind attention to the actual state of things now prevalent in Bengal.

“I believe your attention has been certainly drawn to the amazing number of abduction cases now happening every day in Bengal. These moral irruptions are an unmistakable indication that there is something wrong in the inner working of our social life.

“Prevalence of prostitution and corruptions in some of the Bengal districts is simply amazing. In most of the districts of Western Bengal and in many of the jute areas of Northern and Eastern Bengal brothels are considered to be a necessary part of even a village bazaar. One can easily guess the condition that obtains in big marts or as they are called “Bundars”. During busy season most of the important jute markets have their prostitute quarters augmented by floating brothels! Numerous prostitutes infest these places and ply on their infernal trade in boats which remain moored along side the market. In many parts of Western Bengal almost all fairs are infested with these unhappy women. They erect temporary sheds on the Mela grounds and cater for the people who visit the Mela. In some of the districts quite a number of prostitutes are found settled round a Zemindar’s house or his kutchery. For they are generally patronised by the Zemindar and his officers. Districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, and Rajshahi are particularly notorious in this respect. As is naturally to be expected cases of abduction and molestation of women occur in largest number in these districts. Bengal has nearly 4 lacs of Vaishnab or Bairagi population (exact number male 174,497, female 203,610). Most of these people live by begging and singing. In short, Bengali people spend more than 3 crores of rupees a year for the maintenance of these parasites. What is most unfortunate is that this Vaishnab community is regarded as a waste paper basket of the Hindu Society. Majority of the abduction cases are in connection with Vaishnaba women. Under the garb of religion these unfortunate people lead a most sordid and

corrupt life. I only ask to make confidential enquiry about my statement and find for yourself how far it is correct. Introduction of Charkha coupled with stoppage of indiscriminate charity would save these 4 lacs of people and turn them into a valuable asset.

“Conditions prevailing in and round Calcutta are as bad as can be imagined. Crushing poverty of many of the Western Bengal districts, Midnapur, Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan etc., induces hundreds of women to forsake their village homes and flock to Calcutta and its suburbs. Here they lead a dubious life by working as maid servants, (jhee) betel leaf sellers (Panwali) etc. A very low standard of morality amongst the masses is another cause of widespread prevalence of venereal diseases and leprosy in these districts. Of 15,451 lepers of Bengal 7,240 (nearly half) hail from Burdwan division alone!! (Bengal Census Report 1921, part II, page 162). Again these are the most decaying districts of Bengal and have suffered greatest reduction in population. Strangely enough, drinking is more widespread in these districts than anywhere else in Bengal.

“Theatres of Calcutta are chiefly run by fallen women. These are resorted to by large numbers of students and even by noted public men. Important public meetings are held in these theatre halls. Lengthy appreciations of actresses and dancing girls find a place in the columns of our daily papers (unfortunately some of the most influential Nationalist papers.) Besides, there are vernacular illustrated magazines specially devoted to the subject of drama and dancing etc. Out-turn of debasing literature in Bengali language is perhaps more now than it was ten years ago.

“All these things make one’s heart sink within him and cannot but over-power him with a feeling of despair.

“Sir, as the matter stands I cannot but in all humility ask for a public expression of your opinion on the following points :—

I. Whether a Congress member or volunteer or any one aspiring to be a nationalist worker should visit theatres run by

women or cinema houses where pictures rousing carnal desires are exposed in all seducing form.

II. Whether any public meeting be held in any of these theatre houses.

III. Whether any Indian Nationalist paper should publish advertisements of opera and dancing houses run by women or appreciation of actresses etc., as well as advertisements of wines and intoxicants.

IV. Should not all students and Congress workers strictly abstain from smoking and drinking? I am reliably informed by the traders themselves that Rs. 50,000 worth of cigarettes and bidis are sold every month in the town of Chittagong (population of the town 36,030 and of the district 1,611,422)!!

V. Should not all Municipalities and Local Boards try their utmost to suppress drinking and brothels and should not these bodies exert their utmost to maintain a propaganda to eradicate these social evils? "

This letter was handed to me at Chittagong and has been in my jacket awaiting attention at the first opportunity. The reader is aware how the attempt to wean the fallen sisters from their error has apparently resulted in giving a passport to vice. Prostitution I knew was a tremendous and a growing evil. The tendency to see virtue in vice and excuse evil in the sacred name of art or some other false sentiment has clothed this debasing indulgence with a kind of subtle respectability which is responsible for the moral leprosy which he who runs may see. But I was unprepared for the terrible state the correspondent declares to exist. I fear that he has not exaggerated the evil. For during my tour, I have had corroboration from various sources. Great as the evil is in this age of unbelief or a mere mechanical belief in God and an age of multiplicity of comforts and luxuries almost reminding one of the degradation to which Rome had descended when she was apparently at the zenith of her power, it is not easy to prescribe a remedy. It cannot be remedied by law. London is seething with the vice. Paris is notorious for its vice which has almost become a fashion. If



law would have prevented it, these highly organised nations would have cured their capitals of the vice. No amount of writing on the part of reformers like myself can deal with the evil in any appreciable form. The political domination of England is bad enough. The cultural is infinitely worse. For whilst we resent and therefore endeavour to resist the political domination, we hug the cultural, not realising in our infatuation that when the cultural domination is complete, the political will defy resistance. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not wish to imply that before the British rule prostitution was unknown in India. But I do say that it was not so rampant as now. It was confined to the few upper ten. Now it is fast undoing the youth of the middle classes. My hope lies in the youth of the country. Such of them as are prey to the vice are not vicious by nature. They are helplessly and thoughtlessly drawn to it. They must realise the harm that it has done them and society. They must understand too that nothing but a rigorously disciplined life will save them and the country from utter ruin. Above all unless they visualise God and seek His aid in keeping them from temptation, no amount of dry discipline will do them much good. Truly has the seer said in the Gita that 'desire persist though man may by fasting keep his body under restraint. Desire goes only when one has seen God face to face.' Seeing God face to face is to feel that He is enthroned in our hearts even as a child feels a mother's affection without needing any demonstration. Does a child reason out the existence of a mother's love? Can he prove it to others? He triumphantly declares, 'It is.' So must it be with the existence of God. He defies reason. But He is experienced. Let us not reject the experience of Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Ramdas and a host of other spiritual teachers even as we do not reject that of mundane teachers.

The correspondent has inquired whether Congressmen, may do the many things he has enumerated, such as theatre going etc. I have already remarked that man cannot be made good by law. If I had the power of persuasion I would certain-

ly stop women of ill-fame from acting as actresses, I would prevent people from drinking and smoking, I would certainly prevent all the degrading advertisements that disfigure even reputable journals and newspapers and I would most decidedly stop the obscene literature and portraits that soil the pages of some of our magazines. But, alas, I have not the persuasive power I would gladly possess. But to regulate these things by law whether of the state or the Congress would be a remedy probably worse than the disease. What is wanted is an intelligent, sane, healthy and pure public opinion. There is no law against using kitchens as closets or drawing rooms as stables. But public opinion, that is, public taste will not tolerate such a combination. The evolution of public opinion is at times a tardy process but it is the only effective one.

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*9th July, 1925*

## A SILENT SERVANT

BY M. K. GANDHI

I would ask the reader to share my grief over the death of an esteemed friend and silent public servant—I mean Principal Sushil Rudra who died on Tuesday 30th June. India whose chief disease is her political servitude recognises only those who are fighting publicly to remove it by giving battle to a bureaucracy that has protected itself with a treble line of entrenchment—army and navy, money and diplomacy. She naturally does not know her selfless and self-effacing workers in other walks of life, no less useful than the purely political. Such a humble worker was Sushil Rudra, late Principal of St. Stephens College. He was a first class educationist. As principal, he had made himself universally popular. There was a kind of spiritual bond between him and his pupils. Though he was a Christian, he had room in his bosom for Hinduism and Islam which he regarded with great veneration. His was not an exclusive Christianity that condemned to perdition every one who did not believe in

Jesus Christ as the only saviour of the world. Jealous of the reputation of his own he was tolerant towards the other faiths. He was a keen and careful student of politics. Of his sympathies with the so-called extremists, if he made no parade, he never made any secret either. Ever since my return home in 1915, I had been his guest whenever I had occasion to go to Delhi. It was plain sailing enough so long as I had not declared Satyagraha in respect of the Rowlatt Act. He had many English friends in the higher circles. He belonged to a purely English Mission. He was the first Indian Principal chosen in his college. I, therefore, felt that his intimate association with me and his giving me shelter under his roof might compromise him and expose his college to unnecessary risk. I, therefore, offered to seek shelter elsewhere. His reply was characteristic: 'My religion is deeper than people may imagine. Some of my opinions are vital parts of my being. They are formed after deep and prolonged prayers. They are known to my English friends. I cannot possibly be misunderstood by keeping you under my roof as an honoured friend and guest. And if ever I have to make a choice between losing what influence I may have among Englishmen and losing you, I know what I would choose. You cannot leave me.' 'But what about all kinds of friends who come to see me? Surely, you must not let your house become a caravanserai when I am in Delhi,' I said. 'To tell you the truth,' he replied, 'I like it all. I like the friends who come to see you. It gives me pleasure to think that in keeping you with me, I am doing some little service to my country.' The reader may not be aware that my open letter to the Viceroy giving concrete shape to the Khilafat claim was conceived and drafted under Principal Rudra's roof. He and Charlie Andrews were my revisionists. Non-co-operation was conceived and hatched under his hospitable roof. He was a silent but deeply interested spectator at the private conference that took place between the Maulana's, other Mussalman friends and myself. Religious motive was the foundation for all his acts. There was, therefore, no fear of temporal power, though the same motive also enabled

him to value the existence and the use and the friendship of temporal power. He exemplified in his life the truth that religious perception gives one a correct sense of proportion resulting in a beautiful harmony between action and belief. Principal Rudra drew to himself as fine characters as one could possibly wish for. Not many people know that we owe C. F. Andrews to Principal Rudra. They were twins. Their relationship was a study in ideal friendship. Principal Rudra leaves behind him two sons and a daughter all grown up and settled in life. They know their grief is shared by the numerous friends and admirers of their noble hearted father.

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*23rd July, 1925*

### AN ALL-INDIA MEMORIAL

BY M. K. GANDHI

We the undersigned are of opinion that an all-India fund is as much a necessity as an all-Bengal one to perpetuate the memory of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das. He was as much an all-India man as he was an all-Bengal man. Just as we knew what Deshabandhu would have himself wished us to do as an all-Bengal Memorial so do we know what he would have wished us to do regarding an all-India Memorial. His idea was clearly expressed over a year ago and repeated in his Faridpur Speech that village reconstruction was the thing dearest and nearest his heart for the regeneration of India and for the attainment of Swaraj along peaceful and evolutionary lines. We know, too, that he believed that the beginning and the centre of such, activity lay in the revival and development of hand-spinning in villages and universalisation of Khaddar. It is the one activity that can be made common to all-India and yet can be handled with the least cost. It is the one activity that is calculated to yield immediate results, be they ever so small. All people, rich and poor, young and old, men and women, can personally help

and engage in it if they will. It can, as nothing else can, bind the city people to the villagers and introduce the educated class to them in a most useful manner. It is the one activity that can be common to all the Provinces and all the sects of India and produce the largest economic results. Lastly, though it has a political side it is in its nature so obviously social and economical that it should enlist the support of all, without distinction of party, who believe in the spinning wheel as a great economic factor and as a factor in village reconstruction.

We, therefore, cannot conceive a more fitting Memorial than the universal propagation of the spinning wheel and Khaddar and therefore invite funds for that purpose. We refrain from naming the sum required for this Memorial as it can absorb all it can receive. The subscription given by the public will be the measure of their regard for the memory of the deceased patriot, of their belief in the usefulness of the form the Memorial is to take and of their trust in those who are to handle and operate on the funds. They will be Sjt. M. K. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Roy, Shrimati Sarojini Devi, Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with power to add to their number. Pandit Jawaharlal has consented to act as Hon. Secretary for the Trustees and Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj as Treasurer. Remittances should be sent to Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj, 395, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay, or to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 107, Hewett Road, Allahabad. A full List of donations will be sent to the Press for publication from week to week.

M. K. Gandhi	Motilal Nehru
Rabindranath Tagore	A.K. Azad
P. C. Ray	Jamnalal Bajaj
Sarojini Naidu	Nil Ratan Sircar
J. M. Sen Gupta	C. F. Andrews
Vallabhbhai Patel.	B. E. Bharucha
Shyamsundar Chakravarti	Bidhan Chandra Roy
Sarat Chandra Bose	Nalini Ranjan Sirkar
Satyanand Bose	

*6th August, 1925*

## AN ADDRESS TO MISSIONARIES

BY M. K. GANDHI

[I had the pleasure of delivering an address before the missionaries in Calcutta at Y. W. C. A. on 28th ultimo. I have been supplied with short-hand notes of that address, and as it was of general interest I reproduce below an abridgement of it. I have omitted no salient thought or expression, but I have omitted some descriptive passages. M. K. G.]

Not many of you perhaps know that my association with Christians—not Christians so-called but real Christians, dates from 1889 when as a lad I found myself in London; and that association has grown riper as years have rolled on. In South Africa where I found myself in the midst of inhospitable surroundings I was able to make hundreds of Christian friends. I came in touch with the late Mr. Spencer Watton, Director of South Africa General Mission, and later with the great Divine Rev. Mr. A. Murray and several others.

My acquaintance, therefore, this evening with so many missionaries is by no means a new thing. There was even a time in my life when a very sincere and intimate friend of mine, a great and good Quaker, had designs on me (Laughter). He thought that I was too good not to become a Christian. I was sorry to have disappointed him. One missionary friend of mine in South Africa still writes to me and asks me 'how is it with you?' I have always told this friend that so far as I know it is all well with me. If it was prayer that these friends expected me to make, I was able to tell them that every day the heart-felt prayer within the closed door of my closet went to the Almighty to show me light and give wisdom and courage to follow that light.

In answer to promises made to one of these Christian friends of mine I thought it my duty to see one of the biggest of Indian Christians, as I was told he was,—the late Kali

Charan Banerjee. I went over to him—I am telling you of the deep search that I have undergone in order that I might leave no stone unturned to find out the true path—I went to him with an absolutely open mind and in a receptive mood, and I met him also under circumstances which were most affecting. I found that there was much in common between Mr. Banerjee and myself. His simplicity, his humility, his courage, his truthfulness, all these things I have all along admired. He met me when his wife was on her death-bed. You cannot imagine a more impressive scene, a more ennobling circumstance. I told Mr. Banerjee, 'I have come to you as a seeker'—this was in 1901—'I have come to you in fulfilment of a sacred promise I have made to some of my dearest Christian friends that I will leave no stone unturned to find out the true light.' I told him that I had given my friends the assurance that no worldly gain would keep me away from the light, if I could but see it. Well, I am not going to engage you in giving a description of the little discussion that we had between us. It was very good, very noble. I came away, not sorry, not dejected, not disappointed, but I felt sad that even Mr. Banerjee could not convince me. This was my final deliberate striving to realise Christianity as it was presented to me. Today my position is that though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity. I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being and I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishadas* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. Not that I do not prize the ideal presented therein, not that some of the precious teachings in the Sermon on the Mount have not left a deep impression upon me, but I must confess to you that when doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they have not left any visible and in-

delible effect on me, I owe it to the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

I have told you all these things in order to make it absolutely clear to you where I stand, so that I may have, if you will, closer touch with you. I must add that I did not stop at studying the Bible and the commentaries and other books on Christianity that my friends placed in my hands; but I said to myself, if I was to find my satisfaction through reasoning, I must study the scriptures of other religions also and make my choice. And I turned to the *Koran*. I tried to understand what I could of Judaism as distinguished from Christianity. I studied Zoroastrianism and I came to the conclusion that all religions were right but every one of them imperfect, imperfect naturally and necessarily,—because they were interpreted, with our poor intellects, sometimes with our poor hearts, and more often misinterpreted. In all religions I found to my grief that there were various and even contradictory interpretations of some texts, and I said to myself, ‘Not these things for me. If I want the satisfaction of my soul, I must feel my way. I must wait silently upon God and ask him to guide me.’ There is a beautiful verse in Sanskrit which says ‘God helps only when man feels utterly helpless and utterly humble’. Some of you have come from the Tamil land. When I was studying Tamil, I found in one of the books of Dr. Pope a Tamil proverb which means ‘God helps the helpless’. I have given you this life-story of my own experience for you to ponder over.

You the missionaries come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolators, of men who do not know God. One of the greatest Christian Divines, Bishop Heber, wrote the two lines which have always left a sting with me: ‘Where every prospect pleases, and Man alone is vile.’ I wish he had not written them. My own experience in my travels throughout India has been to the contrary. I have gone from one end of the country to the other, without any prejudice, in a relentless search after truth, and I am not able to say that here in this fair land, watered by the great Ganges, the Brahma-



putra and the Jumna, man is vile. He is not vile. He is as much a seeker after truth as you and I are, possibly more so. This reminds me of a French book translated for me by a French friend. It is an account of an imaginary expedition in search of Knowledge. One party landed in India and found Truth and God personified, in a little Pariah's hut. I tell you there are many such huts belonging to the untouchables where you will certainly find God. They do not reason but they persist in their belief that God is. They depend upon God for His assistance and find it too. There are many stories told throughout the length and breath of India about these noble untouchables. Vile as some of them may be there are noblest specimens of humanity in their midst. But does my experience exhaust itself merely with the untouchables? No. I am here to tell you that there are non-Brahmins, there are Brahmins who are as fine specimens of humanity as you will find in any place on the earth. There are Brahmins today in India who are embodiments of self sacrifice, godliness and humility. There are Brahmins who are devoting themselves body and soul to the service of untouchables, with no expectation of reward from the untouchables, but with execration from orthodoxy. They do not mind it, because in serving Pariahs they are serving God. I can quote chapter and verse from my experience. I place these facts before you in all humility for the simple reason that you may know this land better, the land to which you have come to serve. You are here to find out the distress of the people of India and remove it. But I hope you are here also in a receptive mood and if there is anything that India has to give, you will not stop your ears, you will not close your eyes, and steel your hearts but open up your ears, eyes and most of all your hearts to receive all that may be good in this land. I give you my assurance that there is a great deal of good in India. Do not flatter yourselves with the belief that a mere recital of that celebrated verse in St. John makes a man a Christian. If I have read the Bible correctly, I know many men who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ or have

even rejected the official interpretation of Christianity will, probably, if Jesus came in our midst today in the flesh, be owned by him more than many of us. I therefore ask you to approach the problem before you with open-heartedness, and humility.

I was engaged in a friendly conversation with some missionaries this morning. I do not want to relate that conversation. But I do want to say that they are fine specimens of humanity. They did not want to misunderstand me, but I had to pass nearly one hour and a half in my attempt to explain to them that in writing what I had written I had not written anything in a spirit of ill-will or hatred towards Englishmen. I was hard put to it to carry that conviction. In fact I do not know whether I carried that conviction to them at all. If salt loseth its savour, wherewith will it be salted? If I could not drive home the truth that was in me to the three friends who certainly came with open minds, how should I fare with others? It has often occurred to me that a seeker after truth has to be silent. I know the wonderful efficacy of silence. I visited a monastery Trappist in South Africa. A beautiful place it was. Most of the inmates of that place were under a vow of silence. I enquired of the Father the motive of it and he said that the motive is apparent. We are frail human beings. We do not know very often what we say. If we want to listen to the still small voice that is always speaking within us, it will not be heard if we continually speak.' I understood that precious lesson. I know the secret of silence. I do not know just now as I speak to you whether it would not have been wise if I had said nothing to those friends beyond saying, 'We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away.' As I speak to you, I feel humiliated. Why did I argue with these friends? But I say these things to you first of all to make this confession and secondly to tell you also that if you will refuse to see the other side, if you will refuse to understand what India is thinking, then you will deny yourselves the real privilege of service. I have told my missionary friends, 'noble as you are, you have

isolated yourselves from the people whom you want to serve. I cannot help recalling to you the conversation I related in Darjeeling at the missionary Language School. Lord Salisbury, was waited upon by a deputation of missionaries in connection with China and this deputation wanted protection. I cannot recall the exact words but give you the purport of the answer Lord Salisbury gave. He said 'Gentlemen, if you want to go to China, to preach the message of Christianity, then do not ask for assistance of temporal power. Go with your lives in your hands and if the people of China want to kill you, imagine that you have been killed in the service of God.' Lord Salisbury was right. Christian missionaries come to India under the shadow, or, if you like, under the protection of a temporal power, and it creates an impassable bar.

If you give me statistics that so many orphans have been reclaimed and brought to the Christian faith, I would accept them but I do not feel convinced thereby that it is your mission. In my opinion your mission is infinitely superior to that. You want to find men in India and if you want to do that, you will have to go to the lowly cottages not to give them something, might be to take something from them. A true friend as I claim to be of the missionaries of India and of the Europeans, I speak to you what I feel from the bottom of my heart. I miss receptiveness, humility, willingness on your part to identify yourselves with the masses of India. I have talked straight from my heart. May it find a response from your hearts.

At the end of the address questions were invited. The most important questions and their answers are given below :

Q. How do you think should the missionaries identify themselves with the masses ?

A. The question is somewhat embarrassing. But I would venture to say, 'Copy Charlie Andrews.'

Another in the audience asked what definite work would you suggest that a missionary should do for and among the masses ?

A. Since I have been challenged I must unhesitatingly

answer, 'The Spinning Wheel.' You naturally laugh, but if you knew the masses as I do, you will look upon this very simple instrument of torture (here Mr. Gandhi produced the *takli* he carries with him) with seriousness. You cannot present the hungry and famished masses with God. Their God is their food. General Booth knew what he was doing when at his numerous depots the first thing he did to the hungry men and women who flocked there was to give them a plate of soup. Before he would give them their next meal he called upon them to make splinters for his match factory, and then he introduced them to God. The famished millions are famishing not because there is not enough food produced in India but because they have no work to do. The only work for the millions is the spinning wheel. I know the Industrial Mission House in Calcutta. It is good in its way, but it does not touch even the fringe of the question. The problem is how to take work to the cottages of these men, cottages which are scattered over a surface 1900 miles long and 1500 broad. They will not take the spinning wheel unless they learn the art themselves and unless they spin to set an example to these men who have lost faith in themselves and faith in everything and everybody. And the spinning wheel is useless unless you and I wear Khaddar. Hence it is that I have not hesitated to say to Lord Reading or to Lord Willingdon that I will not be satisfied unless they and their orderlies are dressed from top to toe in Khaddar.

A third inquirer asked, 'Do you definitely feel the presence of the living Christ within you?'

A. If it is the historical Jesus surnamed Christ that the inquirer refers to, I must say I do not. If it is an adjective signifying one of the names of God, then I must say I do feel the presence of God—call him Christ, call him Krishna, call him Rama. We have one thousand names to denote God, and if I did not feel the presence of God within me, I see so much of misery and disappointment every day that I would be a raving maniac and my destination would be the Hooghli.

13th August, 1925

THE LION OF BENGAL

BY M. K. GANDHI

The death of Sir Surendranath Bannerjee removes from Indian political life one who has left upon it the deep impress of his own personality. What though with new ideals and new hopes within recent times he receded into the background? Our present is the result of our past. Ideals and aspirations of the present day would have been impossible without the invaluable work done by pioneers like Sir Surendra. Time was when the student world idolized him, when his advice was considered indispensable in all national deliberations, and his eloquence held audiences spell-bound. It is impossible to recall the stirring events of the partition days in Bengal and not to think with gratitude and pride of Sir Surendranath's matchless services in connection with it. It was then that Sir Surendranath justly earned from his grateful countrymen the title of "Surrender—not." During the blackest period of the time of partition Sir Surendranath never wavered, never lost hope. He threw himself into the agitation with all his might. His enthusiasm infected the whole of Bengal. His determination to unsettle the 'settled fact' was unshaken. He gave us the necessary training in courage and resolution. He taught us not to fear authority. His work in the Education Department was no less valuable than in the political. Through the Ripon College thousands of young men came under his direct influence and received their liberal education. His regular habits gave him health, vigour, and, what may be called for India, a long life. He retained his mental faculties unimpaired up to the last moment. It required a courage of no small order to resume in his seventy-seventh year the editorship of his paper the *Bengalee*. Indeed he was so confident of his mental vigour and physical capacity, that he said to me, when I had the privilege of meeting him at Barrackpore two months ago, that he expect-

ed to live till 91 years, after which he would not wish to live as he would not retain his mental vigour long thereafter. But fates had decided otherwise. They snatched him away from us without notice. For nobody had expected so sudden a death. Upto the early hours of the morning of Thursday the 6th instant he betrayed no sign of dissolution. But though he is no longer with us in the body his services to the country will never be forgotten. He will ever be remembered as one of the makers of modern India.

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*13th August, 1925*

### ADDRESS TO THE ANGLO-INDIANS

[The following report of Gandhiji's 'conversation' with the Anglo-Indians, as he called it, is reproduced for general information. M. D.]

#### WHY I AM DISLOYAL ?

At the outset I would like to clear the ground by taking up the last sentiment of the chairman. I appreciate the viewpoint that he has placed before me and there was a time when I could also say these things about loyalty. But as you know, for the past six years I have not been speaking of loyalty but of disloyalty. It is not that I harbour disloyalty towards anything whatsoever, but I do so against all untruth, all that is unjust, all that is evil. This I want to make clear as I do not want to sail under false colours. I remain loyal to an institution so long as that institution conduces to my growth, to the growth of the nation. Immediately I find that the institution instead of conducing to its growth impedes it, I hold it to be my bounden duty to be disloyal to it. I cannot for one moment say that I am loyal to the present Government, that is, to the present system of Government. I assert that I am every moment of my life seeking to destroy this system of Government which is sapping.

the manhood of India, which is sapping its vitality and its resources, which is degrading alike those who are in charge of the system and those who are governed by that system.

#### HOW TO APPROACH THE QUESTION

But I think that whilst we may agree to differ on this very fundamental question, we must seek to find out whether there are not many points of contact between you and between me—between you and the vast mass of the people who inhabit this beautiful land (if I may say so) of ours. What the ultimate destiny of India will be, we do not know, or we know only this much that it is in our making, it will be what everyone of us whose lot is cast in India wants it to be. But beyond this we do not know, having no control over the minds of millions of human beings who compose Hindustan. But everyone should become an optimist and then there is nothing but the brightest future for this land. That is, today, everyone should be able to say to himself, 'I live for this land. I shall die for this land.' I want you, therefore, to approach the question in a spirit of service and when there is that spirit of service we may erase that disturbing factor. 'Loyalty' or 'disloyalty' does not matter much when a person really wants to serve.

I have come here this evening in a spirit of utter humility and in a spirit of absolute friendship and goodwill towards you. During my incessant wanderings I have come in contact not merely with Hindus, not merely with Mussalmans, but I have come deliberately in contact with all sorts and condition of people. I hope I have made myself accessible to anybody who has wanted to see me but I have even gone out of my way to search out the minorities. As the Mussalmans are the big minority I, as representing the majority of India, think it is my duty to befriend them even though they may reject my advice. You do not occupy even that numerical position and therefore, I have not, wherever I found opportunities to approach you, hesitated to meet you. But I am here to confess to you that the Anglo-Indians have not freely reciprocated that feeling.

My largest contact with the Anglo-Indians has been on the railway trains because they have somehow or other fought shy of the public meetings, perhaps because of the notion that these meetings were meetings of disloyalists. And as you have made loyalty your creed naturally these meetings have repelled you. On the trains, however, I have sought you out.

#### AN UNTRUE LIFE

As an instance of how the Anglo-Indians have isolated themselves from the Indians, Mr. Gandhi gave a vivid narrative of his meeting with some Anglo-Indian youngsters who travelled with him in the same train from Ajmeer. He had an occasion to listen to their profuse vocabulary of slang until they recognised him, shed their naturalness and put on manners. And the behaviour of even those boys afforded ample proof of their isolation. One of them like Indian sweets. But he dare not purchase them when others saw him. 'I eat the sweets only when no one sees me,' he said. He was not an Indian, he thought, and did not want to be observed by Indians. This Mr. Gandhi said, was due to their schooling. "Though you have got Indian blood of which you need be proud—you need not be ashamed of that—I know when you receive a reminder of it you are pained." Mr. Gandhi next told them the story of a young Anglo-Indian who opened his heart to him, who though getting Rs. 400 was scarcely able to make the two ends meet, who had to live beyond his means, because 'I must look a European every inch of me.' "I was stabbed," said Mr. Gandhi "to listen to his story. This is doing violence to humanity, I said to myself. He was a Christian, there was nothing wrong in his demeanour and in spite of the surface polish there was the canker eating into his vitals that he was leading an untrue life."

#### CAST IN YOUR LOT WITH THE MASSES

"Well, I have given you two telling instances. You have to make a choice. What shall you do? Will you attempt the



impossible or will you be what you should be, every inch of you Indian? Let me tell you one thing more. If you go to South Africa or Australia or any Dominion, you know that the same thing which is in store for you. You will be classed among the coloured men and you will have no status. Those of you who may possess a white skin may deceive the Immigration Officer, but your relatives and sons may betray you. This is the position. The colour bar is too terrible there. You also will be counted among moral lepers. Mr. Malan now says he would not drive us out, he would starve us out of South Africa, and would practise hypocrisy double-distilled. The 'bar sinister,' as Lord Morley put it, applies to us even in England. Now it is your privilege to fight this. If you cast in your lot with the masses of India from which you have sprung there is nothing but hope for you, me and even for Government to whom you think you are bound to be loyal."

#### ABANDON APING HABIT

"You can become a bridge so that all Indians and all Englishmen may cross to and fro without either feeling injured or hurt or feeling any degree of inconvenience. But if you want to aspire after the heights of Simla, well, those heights are unattainable and therefore poverty must be your lot, and also the lot of India. An important community like the Anglo-Indians, brave, resourceful, you are going to predition simply because you would not see the plain truth, but persist in an impossible attempt. In this process you are cutting yourselves away from the masses. Thus you have been ostracised by Indians and Europeans both.

He gave another anecdote of a very cultured Anglo-Indian in Kathiawad trying to live the European way of life being ostracised everywhere. "The picture of that tragedy still rises before me," he said.

#### MAKE YOUR CHOICE

"I do want to tell you at this critical moment of our national life, 'Anglo-Indians, make your choice with determi-

nation and courage, whether you want to go away from the nation and whether you want to live up to the style of Europeans.' Mind you, I am not asking you to cut yourselves adrift from Englishmen. They are far more precious to me today than they were before, because today I am leading the natural life. There was a time when I was also aping the Europeans. Little things guided my life then. But at a precious moment of my life, I threw them into the Indian ocean, and turned my back on them. 'No more this life for me,' I said, 'no more shall I consent to become the "blotting-sheet of civilisation," to use Sidgwick's picturesque phrase. Hence I have become more lovable, more approachable. I had never before in my life so many friends in Europe as I have today. That is because I have shed all unnaturalness. I may be blunt, but bluntness is better than put up courtesy. I would therefore ask you to shed this aping habit, to think for the masses, merge yourselves into the masses so that they can be lifted and we can show to the world a beautiful specimen of Indian humanity in which all races can blend and mingle, each retaining its special admirable characteristics, each keeping every bit of what is best in it. That is your privilege, if you will exercise it.'

#### THE INDIANS' DUTY

"I have talked to you about your duty. Well, if I became the Viceroy of India, which I think is never coming to pass, I would simply give you and the other minorities the choice and ask you to take what you want. I would call all the leaders of the parties and tell them my proposal. Then I would call such of you as are numerically weakest to come first and to ask what you want. In services I would insist on a decent examination test, i. e.. I would only ask a candidate, 'How much of a man or woman you are? Have you got the ability to rise to the occasion? Provided he or she passes these tests, I would select first the one who belongs to the least numerical section. I would thus give preference to all minorities along

just lines, consistent with the welfare of India. When I use this phrase I assure you I am not doing any verbal jugglery. It will be none of my object to see that only Hindus can come in. Welfare of India means welfare of India as a whole, not of Hindus and Mussalmans or of a particular community. I would not flatter you or pamper you but give you your due."

#### VOLUNTARY PACT

Mr. Gandhi next suggested that the Anglo-Indians' interests, as those of all minorities, would under his scheme, be protected by a voluntary pact—a pact not supported by legislation which always presupposes a third party, but absolutely voluntary like the pact between himself and the Swarajists, like the pact he offered to the Mussalmans at Delhi. So long as they had no faith in the justice of the majorities they must have this protection by a voluntary pact. The parties to the pact were in honour bound to act according to the pact. If they reduced it to a scrap of paper they would do so at their risk. To the Anglo-Indians he would say that if the pact was not respected, if sacred promises were not carried out, they could have revenge on those who broke the pact. Concluding said Mr. Gandhi, "I have dissected my heart. It has come unpolished in a spirit of friendship. May you also receive it in such a spirit."

#### MEANING OF SURRENDER

Mr. Gandhi then invited questions. Dr. Moreno was the first questioner: "What would be your attitude if, as it appears, in the scheme of Indianisation Anglo-Indians would be adversely affected?"

Answer: I would not oust a single Anglo-Indian if it was in my hands.

Question:—You have made over the Congress to Swarajists and yet you talk of an All-Party programme. How can the Anglo-Indians engage in obstructionist tactics with Swarajists?

Answer:—I have not made over the Congress to the Swarajists. I have absolved them from the Pact entered into between

them and me. I could not, even if I would, hand over the Congress to anyone. It only means that every member can exercise his judgment in respect of the alteration or otherwise of the Franchise. The Congress which was made at Belgaum a non-political organisation will now be converted into a predominantly political institution, with the result that political resolutions could be brought forward now, and the bar would be removed from the path of those who could not enter the Congress as a non-political body. It would not be a Swarajist body, it would be a predominantly political body. The Swarajists are, it is true, predominant today, but that is because others have kept back, and if they outnumber the others it will be because the others have no organisation. As regards obstruction, it may be wrong, it may be right. But you surely do not expect to react on the Swarajists by standing out of the Congress. Join the Congress in large numbers and make them change their policy if you wish."

In reply to a question how Mr. Gandhi could secure their interests when under proportional representation they could get none at all, Mr. Gandhi made his proposal of the voluntary pact clearer. "Before I would draw up the Swaraj scheme, I would ask you what you want. A document setting out the terms would be publicly acknowledged. Assuming a fair measure of public opinion and honesty, Anglo-Indians and other minorities could not be possibly treated unfairly."

#### COMMONWEALTH OF INDIA BILL

Questioned as to why Mr. Gandhi had not signed Mrs. Besant's memorandum on the Commonwealth of India Bill, he said that as he had said before, if he got a cablegram from Lord Birkenhead that the Bill would be passed if he subscribed to it he would cable his signature. But he had declined to associate his name with the Bill simply because he did not want to be insulted. When he knew that the throwing of the Bill on the scrap-heap was an absolute certainty, as he felt it could not otherwise be he could not possibly sign it. He had had enough

insults before, but he had never courted them. He had taken insults in good grace when they had been flung in his face. But in this particular case he thought it would be courting an insult, which he was not prepared to do. As it is, he had got an indication of it that very day."

"I made" said Mr. Gandhi, referring to that indication, "a most innocent practical suggestion to the Government of India. Deshabandhu Das had played the game, and you know how much at heart he had the case of the political prisoners. I said to the Government, 'will you perform one single graceful act which will strike the imagination of the nation? Will you release the prisoners?' If that was done it would have served a double purpose. That would have taken the sting, if there was any, out of these political prisoners, because they would have felt that they had been released out of respect to the memory of Deshabandhu and they could not commit a breach of trust reposed in them. And then by this act the Government would have gained a supreme moral victory, so that they could have cleared the atmosphere for negotiations. But no. Lord Birkenhead says he is prepared to consider anything that Indians might have to suggest in order to allay animosities, but the suggestion made is not practical. I tell you I have not the ingenuity to make a more practical suggestion than what I have made. But it has gone to the usual waste paper basket. So if these little things could not be had, what is the use of going on with the big Commonwealth of India Bill? Mrs. Besant has a robust optimism and though on the wrong side of life like me, she thinks, she must work on."

#### "NO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES"

Another friend asked as to what Mr. Gandhi would suggest in the transition stage, if, for instance, they dropped the prefix 'Anglo' and joined the Congress. They would lose some of the trifling privileges they enjoy, and would get nothing to compensate for them.

"That," said Mr. Gandhi, "was the fairest of questions.

For some purposes, you say, you are classed with Europeans. I have asked you to shed those privileges. You have mentioned the eligibility to the Indian Auxiliary Force. I would suggest that you will proudly say, 'We will have none of these special privileges. They demoralise and pauperise us.' I want you to think in the terms of the masses and not in the terms of the hierarchy and priesthood of Anglo-India. The upper section amongst you wants to be absorbed by Europeans—an impossible ambition—and the lower would be absorbed in the Indians in spite of itself. This involuntary merging can do no good. How then, you will ask, is it possible for you to be absorbed voluntarily? Well, I would not want you to be lulled into a false sense of security, but I would ask you to unhesitatingly shed unnatural life you lead. If after becoming Indians, you are betrayed by the Indians themselves, you will turn rebels against the Indians, but refuse to aspire to be Europeans again. I ask you not to be cowed down by the thought of a small minority. It is sometimes a privilege. I have so often said that I would love to be in the minority of one, because this artificial majority, which is the result of the masses' reverence for me, is a clog in my progress. But for the clog, I would hurl defiance today. I can neither be quickened into vanity by blind adoration, nor shall I sacrifice a tittle of my principle for mass adoration. The Englishmen are a microscopic minority. They do not fear that they would be engulfed. Of course at the back of their security is the force of the bayonet. But it will someday ruin them if they are not warned betimes. You may rely either on your soul-force or sword-force. But in no case would you put up with the present degradation."

#### AN IRREPRESSIBLE OPTIMIST

Asked whether he was an optimist, and if so, why he should despair of the future because Lord Birkenhead might not be always in office, he said, "I am an irrepressible optimist, because I believe in myself. That sounds very arrogant: doesn't it? But I say it from the depths of my humility. I believe in

the supreme power of God. I believe in Truth and therefore I have no doubt in the future of this country or the future of humanity. Whatever Lord Birkenhead may say, I trust in God. Who knows how to confound the wisdom of men. He is a consummate *Jadugar* and I have placed myself in His hands. But He is a hard taskmaster. He would accept nothing short of the best you are capable of. To me the change of Government does not mean anything. I am an optimist because I expect many things from myself. I have not got them I know, as I am not yet a perfect being. If I was one, I should not even need to reason with you. When I am a perfect being, I have simply to say the word, and the nation will listen. I want to attain that perfection by service."

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*20th August, 1925*

### PUBLIC FUNDS

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have critics who see nothing but flaws in everything I say or do. I profit by their criticism sometimes. But I have also the good fortune to have friends who may be described as guardians of my virtue. They would have me to become a perfect man, and therefore, feel agitated when they think that I have erred, or am likely to err in anything I may say or do. One such well-wisher, whose caution has before now proved to be of the greatest value to me, writes to the following effect :

"Within my experience, you have been responsible for collecting subscriptions for several funds, such as for Jallianwalla, Satyagraha Sabha, Swadeshi, Swaraj, and now you have fixed yourself up in Bengal for Deshabandhu Memorial fund. Are you satisfied that the previous funds have been well managed, and now the Deshabandhu

Memorial fund will also be properly managed? You owe it to the public to render a full explanation."

The correspondent might have added the Tilak Swaraj fund, and also the Flood Relief fund in the South.

The question is pertinent. Even in course of my collections for the Deshabandhu Memorial, those who have paid me handsomely, have given me the caution. My general rule is that I never identify myself with any fund where I do not know those who are to operate upon it, and where I am not satisfied about their honesty. The first three funds were raised not by me, or on the strength of any reputation I possess, but they were raised by Mr. Banker, whom even then I knew well and who had a perfect right to use my name. I know, too that he could have raised all the money that was received on the strength of his own undoubted reputation and service rendered. Fullest accounts were kept of the receipts and disbursements, and were published also, if my recollection serves me right. But, in any event, these are very small accounts.

I have referred to the Tilak Swaraj Fund, although my correspondent has not. I have heard repeated complaints about it. It was the biggest public fund ever raised. I have the clearest conscience about it. The closest scrutiny of the disposal of that fund will show that generally there has been no laxity about its administration, and that there have been far less losses than are incurred by commercial firms. The latter generally write off 10 p. c. as their book-debts. I have known big South African firms writing off so much as 25 p. c. as a normal thing. In the transactions on the Tilak Swaraj fund we have not lost anything near 10 p. c. I doubt if the total losses would amount to 2 p. c. The working treasurer insisted upon vouchers for everything. The accounts have been audited from time to time. They have been published. This is not to say that in some cases there has not been gross misappropriation by Congress workers who were entrusted with funds. This is inevitable where monies have to be disbursed through hundreds of channels. All that is possible is to ensure against the looseness



or carelessness on the part of top-men. The wonder to me is, that on the whole, it is possible to show as clean a record as we have.

Then take the Jallianwalla Bagh fund. Here again there is accurate account-keeping. The accounts have been published also from time to time. The place is well looked after. Pandit Malaviyaji may be considered to be the soul of that fund. The place is kept beautifully clean, and from a dung-heap it has been turned into a garden. Complaints, however, have been made that no fitting memorial has yet been raised, and the money is allowed to lie idle. If it is a charge, I must confess that I am perhaps more answerable for it than the others. Even plans have been prepared, but I felt that conditions of the time when the fund was raised were altered immediately after. The Bagh itself has been, in some way or other, a bone of contention between different parties. I do not know that we have seen the last of it. Memorial was to be, as it should be, a memorial of solid communal unity—a triumph out of a tragedy. Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood that flowed on that fateful 13th in a mingled stream, was to signify an unbreakable union. Where is that union to-day? It will be time to think of building a memorial when we stand united. For the present, so far as I am concerned, it is enough that the Bagh stands, as a little bit of a lung in crowded Amritsar, with its narrow, tortuous and dirty lanes.

Now, I come to the Deshabandhu Memorial fund. The treasurer of the fund is a host in himself. But I know that he will not be forever possessed of it. It will ultimately vest in the trustees. The five original trustees are nominees of the deceased patriot. Every one of them has a status in society, and a reputation to lose. Some of them are monied men. These five original trustees have added two more. They are, again, men connected not with one public Trust but many. One of them, Sir Nilratan Sircar, is the premier physician of Calcutta, and the other, Mr. S. R. Das, the first cousin of the deceased, is the Advocate General of Bengal. If these seven trustees are no

capable of rendering a good account of themselves, and doing justice to the trust reposed in them, I should despair of any trust succeeding in India. The mansion is there, and I know that Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, another medical trustee and a physician of the first rank is busy evolving plans for putting it to the use for which it is intended. It has been whispered to me that possibly Mr. S. R. Das, being the Advocate General of Bengal, cannot be trustee. I do not know the law in the matter. I knew that he was Advocate General of Bengal when he undertook the trust; but if it is an over-sight there will be a trustee appointed in his place, who will be equal in reputation to him. If Mr. S. R. Das can remain a trustee, I was privileged to know enough of him to be able to assure the readers that he will neglect nothing to make the administration of the trust a thorough success. Up to the moment of his departure for England it occupied his care and attention. But I feel sure that every one of the original trustees will be as jealous of the memory of the deceased as any can be, and that they will make the proposed hospital and nurses' training institution worthy of his memory. So much for the All-Bengal Deshabandhu Memorialfund.

About the All-India Memorial fund, I am myself one of the trustees. The object of the Memorial is nearest to my heart. My fellow trustees are as well known to the public as any public man. The Secretary is a seasoned soldier, and so is the treasurer,—both respectively Secretary and Treasurer of the Congress also.

Let me, however, in conclusion, warn the public that the safety of the public fund lies more even in an intelligent vigilance of the public than in the strict integrity of those who are in charge of funds. Absolute honesty of the trustees is a necessity, but public inertia is a crime. Ignorant criticism must not be mistaken for intelligent vigilance. What I have found generally is ignorant criticism. What I would love to see is, that some public men, with a knowledge of account-keeping, make it a point, now and again, of overhauling the administration of public funds, and bringing the administrators to book.

20th August, 1925

# MINIATURE SWARAJ

BY M. K. GANDHI

[The following report of a speech by Gandhiji at an "At Home" given him by the Indian Association, Jamshedpur will be of interest. M. D.]

As you know I am a labourer myself, I pride myself on calling myself a scavenger, weaver, spinner, farmer and what not, and I do not feel ashamed that some of these things I know but indifferently. It is a pleasure to me to identify myself with the labouring classes, because without labour we can do nothing. There is a great Latin saying of which the meaning is 'to labour is to pray' and one of the finest writers of Europe has said that a man is not entitled to eat unless he labours, and by labour he does not mean labour with the intellect, but labour with the hands. The same thought runs throughout Hindu religion. 'He who eats without labour eats sin, is verily a thief.' This is the literal meaning of a verse in *Bhagwad Gita*. I therefore pride myself on the fact that I can identify myself with labour throughout the world.

It was my ambition to see one of the greatest—if not the greatest—Indian enterprise in India, and study the conditions of work there. But none of my activities is one sided, and as my religion begins and ends with Truth and non-violence, my identification with labour does not conflict with my friendship with capital. And believe me, throughout my public service of 35 years, though I have been obliged to range myself seemingly against capital, capitalists have in the end regarded me as their true friend. And in all humility I may say that I have come here also as a friend of the capitalists—a friend of the Tatas. And here it would be ungrateful on my part, if I do not give you a little anecdote about how my connection with the Tatas began. In South Africa when I was struggling along with the Indians there in the attempt to retain our self-respect and vindi-

cate our status it was the late Sir Ratan Tata who first came forward with assistance. He wrote me a great letter and sent a princely donation,—a cheque for Rs. 25,000 and a promise in the letter to send more if necessary. Ever since I have a vivid recollection of my relations with the Tatas and you can well imagine how pleasurable it has been for me to be with you, and you will believe me when I say that when I part company with you tomorrow, I shall do so with a heavy heart because I shall have to go away without having seen so many things, for it would be presumption on my part to say at the end of two days that I had really studied things here. I know well enough the magnitude of the task before one who wants to study this great enterprise.

I wish to this great Indian Firm all the prosperity that it deserves and to this great enterprise every success. And may I hope that the relations between this great house and labourers who work here under their care will be of the friendliest character? At Ahmedabad I have had much to do with the capitalists and workmen, and I have always said that my ideal is that capital and labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony, capital not only looking to the material welfare of the labourers but their moral welfare also,—capitalists being trustees for the welfare of the labouring classes under them.

I am told that though so many Europeans and Indians live here, their relations are of a happy character. I hope the information is literally true. It is the privilege of both of you to be associated in this great enterprise and it is possible for you to give India an object-lesson in amity and goodwill. You will, I hope, have best relations with one another not only under the roofs of the huge workshops you work in, but you will also carry your amity outside your workshops and both of you will realise that you have come to live and work here as brothers and sisters, never regarding another as inferior, or oneself as inferior. And if you succeed in doing that you will have a miniature Swaraj.

I have said that I am a non-co-operator, I call myself a civil resister—and both words have come to possess a bad odour in the English language like so many other English words—but I non-co-operate in order that I may be able to co-operate. I cannot satisfy myself with false co-operation,—anything inferior to 24 carats gold. My non-co-operation does not prevent me from being friendly even to Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer. It harms no one, it is non-co-operation with evil, with an evil system and not with the evil-doer. My religion teaches me to love even an evil-doer, and my non-co-operation is but part of that religion. I am saying these things not to soothe the ears of any one,—I have in my life never been guilty of saying things I did not mean—my nature is to go straight to the heart and if often I fail in doing so for the time being, I know that truth will ultimately make itself heard and felt, as it has often done in my experience. The wish therefore that the relations between you should be of the friendliest character is a desire from the bottom of my heart. And it is my deep prayer that you may help in delivering India from evil and bondage and help her to give the message of peace to the outside world. For this meeting of Indians and Europeans in India must have or can be made to have a special meaning, and what can be better than that we two may live together so as to spread peace and goodwill on earth? May God grant that in serving the Tatas you will also serve India and will always realise that you are here for a much higher mission than merely working for an industrial enterprise.

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*20th August, 1925*

## FOR CHRISTIANS

BY M. K. GANDHI

[The other day I was privileged to address what was to be a meeting of Christian Indians predominantly but what turned out to be a meeting of European Christians predominantly. My address, therefore, took naturally a different shape from what it was to be. Nevertheless, I give below a brief summary of portions of the address, as, in my opinion, it is of interest to know what one, who has lived in their midst amid various scenes and surroundings, has thought about and felt for them

M. K. G.]

When I was a youth I remember a Hindu having become a convert to Christianity. The whole town understood that the initiation took the shape of this well-bred Hindu partaking of beef and brandy in the name of Jesus Christ and discarding his national costume. I learnt in later years, that such a convert as so many of my missionary friends put it, came to a life of freedom out of a life of bondage, to a life of plenty out of one of penury. As I wander about throughout the length and breadth of India I see many Christian Indians almost ashamed of their birth, certainly of their ancestral religion, and of their ancestral dress. The aping of Europeans on the part of Anglo-Indians, is bad enough but the aping of them by Indian converts is a violence done to their country and shall I say, even to their new religion. There is a verse in the New Testament to bid Christians avoid meat if it would offend their neighbours. Meat here I presume, includes drink and dress. I can appreciate uncompromising avoidance of all that is evil in the old, but where there is not only no question of anything evil but where an ancient practice may be even desirable, it would be a crime to part with it when one knows for certain that the giving up would deeply hurt relatives and friends. Conversion must not mean denationalisation. Conversion should mean a definite

giving up of the evil of the old, adoption of all the good of the new and a scrupulous avoidance of everything evil in the new. Conversion, therefore, should mean a life of greater dedication to one's own country, greater surrender to God, greater self-purification. Years ago I met the late Kali Charan Bannerjee. Had I not known before I went there that he was a Christian, I should certainly not have noticed from the outward appearance of his home that he was one. It was no different from an ordinary modern Hindu home,—simple and meagre in furniture. The great man was dressed like an ordinary un-Europeanised Hindu Bengali. I know that there is a marvellous change coming over Christian Indians. There is on the part of a large number of them a longing to revert to original simplicity, a longing to belong to the nation and to serve it, but the process is too slow. There need be no waiting. It requires not much effort, but I was told, and even as I write, I have a letter from a Christian Indian before me telling me that he and his friends find it difficult to make the change, because of the opposition of their superiors. Some of them tell me that they are even jealously watched, and any movement on their part to identify themselves with national movements is strongly condemned. The late Principal Rudra and I used often to discuss this evil tendency. I well remember how he used to deplore it. I am offering a tribute to the memory of a dead friend when I inform the reader that he used often to express his grief that it was too late in life for him to change some of the unnecessary European habits to which he was brought up. Is it not truly deplorable that many Christian Indians discard their own mother-tongue, bring up their children only to speak in English? Do they not thereby completely cut themselves adrift from the nation in whose midst they have to live? But they may answer in self-defence that many Hindus and even Mussalmans have become denationalised. The *tu quoque* argument serves no useful purpose. I am writing not as a critic but as a friend, who has enjoyed for the past thirty years the closest intimacy with hundreds of Christian Indians. I want my

missionary friends and Christian Indians to reciprocate the spirit in which these lines are written. I write in the name and for the sake of heart unity which I want to see established among the people of this land professing different faiths. In nature there is a fundamental unity running through all the diversity we see about us. Religions are no exception to the natural law. They are given to mankind so as to accelerate the process of realisation of fundamental unity.

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*27th August, 1935*

SANATANA HINDU

BY M. K. GANDHI

I have a correspondent who always brings me to book for the slightest negligence on my part. He is evidently a regular student of "*Young India*", but no blind admirer. He is a candid but friendly critic, and if he sees something good in my writings he detects also errors. One of his letters drawing attention to a possible inconsistency in my writings has long remained in my file. One portion of it deals with the definition of 'Sanatana Hindu.' Here is the letter :

"You have often declared yourself a Sanatana Hindu, defining one as a believer in the Vedas, Smritis etc., and laid emphasis on the institution of castes by birth as legitimately following from those 'Scriptures.' Of course you limit the number of castes to the supposed pristine four. (I say 'supposed pristine' advisedly—for even as early as the times of the production of the *Manu* and other Smritis there had been already so many castes evolved out of and recognised over and above the ideal four,—although, be it noted, inter-dining and inter-marriage amongst them all had not yet come to be interdicted.) Now the fourth or last in order of the 'fundamental' castes is the Sudra, which is



debarred by those very 'Scriptures' a belief in which you regard as the *sine qua non* of a Sanatana Hindu, as well as by their 'twice-born' professors, from studying or reciting the Divine Vedas including the *Gayatri*, a recitation of which you mention as obligatory upon a Sanatana Hindu (without distinction of caste). So the question arises: How can anyone (*e.g.* a Sudra) be said to belong to a religion (*vis.* Hindusim as defined by you), if the mere reading, reciting or even the hearing of its Scripture is tabooed to him, although it were a sacrilege? How can you expect a man to be a swimmer without letting him step into water? Either one who is born a Sudra cannot be a Sanatana Hindu in your sense, or else a Sanatana Hindu must be something very different from what you define one to be. (I refer you to your old article on 'Hinduism' 1921 and your address to the cow conference at Belgaum as printed in *Young India*, 29—1—'25). I for one who am a Brahmin by birth cannot glory in the name of 'Hindu' so long as an exemplar of *real* Sanatana Dharma like you permits the term to cover a bundle of contradictions like the one I have pointed out. Lastly, in view of your mention of *Gayatri*, may I humbly inquire whether you have in all your 'twice-born' life never omitted to include the *Gayatri* in your daily prayers?"

I am not a literalist. Therefore I try to understand the *spirit* of the various scriptures of the world. I apply the test of Truth and Ahimsa laid down by these very scriptures for interpretation. I reject what is inconsistent with that test, and I appropriate all that is consistent with it. The story of a Sudra having been punished by Ramachandra for daring to learn the Vedas I reject as an interpolation. And in any event, I worship Rama, the perfect being of my conception, not a historical person facts about whose life may vary with the progress of new historical discoveries and researches. Tulsidas had nothing to do with the Rama of history. Judged by historical test, his Ramayana would be fit for the scrap heap. As a

spiritual experience, his book is almost unrivalled at least for me. And then, too, I do not swear by every word that is to be found in so many editions published as the Ramayana of Tulsidas. It is the spirit running through the book that holds me spell-bound. I cannot myself subscribe to the prohibition against Sudras learning the Vedas. Indeed, in my opinion, at the present moment, we are all predominantly Sudras so long as we are serfs. Knowledge cannot be the prerogative of any class or section. But I can conceive the impossibility of people assimilating higher or subtler truths, unless they have undergone preliminary training, even as these who have not made preliminary preparations are quite unfit to breathe the rarefied atmosphere in high altitudes, or those who have no preliminary training in simple mathematics are unfit to understand or assimilate higher Geometry or Algebra. Lastly, I believe in certain healthy conventions. There is a convention surrounding the recitation of the *Gayatri*. The convention is that it should be recited only at stated times and after ablutions performed in the prescribed manner. As I believe in those conventions, and as I am not able always to conform to them, for years past I have followed the later Saints, and therefore have satisfied myself with the *Dwadasha Mantra* of the Bhagawat or the still simpler formula of Tulsidas and a few selections from the Gita and other works, and a few Bhajanas in *Prakrit*. These are my daily spiritual food—my *Gayatri*. They give me all the peace and solace I need from day to day.

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17th September, 1925

TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is a privilege for me to enjoy the friendship of so many unknown American and European friends. It pleases me to note that the circle is ever widening, perhaps more especially in America. I had the pleasure of receiving a warm invitation

about a year ago to visit that continent. The same invitation has now been repeated with redoubled strength and with the offer to pay all expenses. I was unable then as I am now, to respond to the kind invitation. To accept it is an easy enough task, but I must resist the temptation, for I feel that I can make no effective appeal to the people of that great continent unless I make my position good with the intellectuals of India.

I have not a shadow of a doubt about the truth of my fundamental position. But I know that I am unable to carry with me the bulk of educated India. I can therefore gain no effective help for my country from the Americans and Europeans so long as I remain isolated from educated India. I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity. But I feel that I should be going out of my orbit if I left it for help from the West. I must be satisfied for the time being with such help as I can get from the West, speaking to it from my smaller Indian platform. If I go to America or to Europe I must go in my strength not in my weakness, which I feel to-day,—the weakness, I mean, of my country. For the whole scheme for the liberation of India is based upon the development of internal strength. It is a plan of self-purification. The peoples of the West, therefore, can best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it. Let the specialists come to India with an open mind and in a spirit of humility as befits a searcher after Truth. Then, perhaps they will see the reality instead of a glorified edition that in spite of all my desire to be absolutely truthful I am likely to present if I went to America. I believe in thought-power more than in the power of the word, whether written or spoken. And if the movement that I seek to represent has vitality in it and has divine blessing upon it, it will permeate the whole world without my physical presence in its different parts. Any way at the present moment I see no light before me. I must patiently plod in India until I see my way clear for going outside the Indian border.

After passing the invitation, the American friend puts a number of questions for my consideration. I welcome them and gladly take the opportunity of answering them through these columns. He says:

“Whether you decide, now or later, to come here or not to come, I trust you will find the following questions worth considering. They have developed insistently in my mind for a long time.”

His first question is:

“Has the time arrived—or is it coming—when your best way to help India will be by moving the whole world— and especially England and America — to a new Consciousness?”

I have partly answered the question already. In my opinion the time has not yet arrived—it may come any day—for me to go out of India to move the whole world to a new consciousness. The process, however, is even now indirectly and unconsciously going on though slowly.

“Are not the present-day interests of all mankind, everywhere, so inextricably inter-woven that no single country, like India can be moved far out of its present relationships to the others?”

I do believe with the writer that no single country can remain in isolation for any length of time. The present plan for securing Swaraj is not to attain a position of isolation but one of full self-realisation and self-expression for the benefit of all. The present position of bondage and helplessness hurts not only India, not only England, but the whole world.

“Is not your message and method essentially a world gospel—which will find its power in responsive souls, here and there, in many countries, who will thereby, gradually, remake the world?”

If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message, and methods are indeed in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a

large and daily growing number of men and women of the West.

"If you demonstrate your message in the language only of the East and in terms only of Indian emergencies, is there not grave danger that inessentials will be confused with fundamentals—that some features which correspond only to extreme situations in India will be wrongly understood to be vital in the universal sense?"

I am alive to the danger pointed out by the writer, but it seems to be inevitable. I am in the position of a scientist who is in the midst of a very incomplete experiment and who therefore, is unable to forecast large results and the larger corollaries in a language capable of being understood. In the experimental stage, therefore, I must run the risk of the experiment being misunderstood as it has been and probably still is in many places.

"Ought you not to come to America (which in spite of all her faults is perhaps, potentially, the most spiritual of all living peoples) and tell the world what your message means in terms of Western, as well as Eastern, civilization?"

People in general will understand my message through its results. The shortest way, therefore, perhaps of making it effectively heard is to let it speak for itself, at any rate for the time being.

"For example, should the Western followers of your inspiration preach and practice the spinning wheel?"

It is certainly not necessary for the Western people to preach and practice the spinning wheel unless they will do so out of sympathy or for discipline or with a view to applying their matchless inventive faculty to making the spinning wheel a better instrument while retaining its essential characteristic as a cottage industry. But the message of the spinning wheel is much wider than its circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others,

creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant. The larger message is naturally for all.

“Is your condemnation of rail-roads, doctors, hospitals and other features of modern civilization essential and unalterable? Should we not, first, try to develop a spirit great enough to spiritualise the machinery and the organised, scientific and productive powers of modern life?”

My condemnation of rail-roads etc., whilst true where it stands, has little or no bearing on the present movement which disregards none of the institutions mentioned by the writer. In the present movement I am neither attacking rail-roads nor hospitals; but in an ideal State they seem to me to have little or no place. The present movement is just the attempt the writer desires. Yet it is not an attempt to spiritualise the machinery—because that seems to me an impossible task—but to introduce, if it is at all possible, a human or the humane spirit among the men behind the machinery. Organisation of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organisation of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong but of the whole human race. Thus Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries but on the contrary they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans under my scheme seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill.

“Is it not possible, in conditions so favourable as America’s to clarify and advance the evolution of the best human Consciousness into such purpose and power,

courage and beneficence, as shall liberate the souls of India's millions—and of all men everywhere?"

It is undoubtedly possible. Indeed it is my hope that America will seek the evolution of the best human consciousness; but that time is perhaps not yet. Probably it will not be before India has found her own soul. Nothing will please me more than to find America and Europe making the difficult path of India as easy as it is possible for them to do. They can do so by withdrawing the temptations in India's way and by encouraging her in her attempt to revive her ancient industries in her own villages.

"Why is it that people like myself, in every country, are grateful to you and eager to follow you? Is it not for two reasons, chiefly:—

First; Because the next and basic need throughout the world is for a new spiritual consciousness—a realisation, in the thought and feeling of average people, of the equal divinity of all human beings and the unity, brotherhood of all?

Second; Because you, more than any other widely known man, have this consciousness—together with the power to arouse it in others?"

I can only hope that the writer's estimate is true.

"It is a world need—is it not?—to which you have the best answer that God has vouchsafed to man? How can your mission be fulfilled in India alone? If my arm or leg could be vitalised to an extent far beyond the balance of my body, would that make for my general health—or even for the permanent best good of the one favoured member?"

I am fully aware that my mission cannot be fulfilled in India alone but I hope I am humble enough to recognise my limitations and to see that I must keep for the time being to my restricted Indian platform till I know the result of the experiment in India itself. As I have already replied, I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world.

The individual, being pure, sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all.

“May I even submit,—with deep reverence for your message—that possibly your own vision and inspiration would benefit by adjustment to the world instead of only, or chiefly, to India?”

I recognise the considerable force of the foregoing statement. It is not at all impossible that a visit to the West may give me not a wider outlook—for I have endeavoured to show that it is the widest possible—but it may enable me to discover new methods of realising the outlook. If such is my need, God will open the way for me.

“Is the political form of government, in India or anywhere, so important as the average individual’s soul force—his courageous expression of the best inspiration he can derive from the divine spirit within and all about him?”

The average individual’s soul-force is any day the most important thing. The political form is but a concrete expression of that soul-force. I do not conceive the average individual’s soul-force as distinguished and existing apart from the political form of Government. Hence I believe that after all a people has the Government which it deserves. In other words self-government can only come through self-effort.

“Is not the basic need everywhere, for the clarification and development of this soul force in individuals—beginning, possibly, with a few people and spreading like a divine contagion to the many?”

It is, indeed.

“You teach, rightly, that the faithful development of such soul-force in India will assure India’s freedom. Will it not everywhere shape all political, economic and international institutions including the issues of Peace or War? Can those forms of human civilization be made radically superior in India to the rest of the world—now, when all mankind are neighbours?”



I have already answered this question in the preceding paragraphs. I have claimed in these pages before now that India's freedom must revolutionise the world's outlook upon Peace and War. Her impotence affects the whole of mankind.

"You know, better than I or anyone, how all these questions should be answered. I chiefly seek to express my eager faith in your gospel, my hungry desire for your leadership in solving the urgent problems of America and of all mankind. Therefore, will you graciously remember that, if (or when) the time may come that India's progress in the directions you have so inspiringly outlined appears to pause—waiting for the Western world to come up alongside—then we of the West stand urging you to give us a few months of your time and your personal presence. My own feeling is that if you will call us and instruct us, we (your uncounted followers scattered obscurely over the wide earth) will join our lives to yours in the discovery and realisation of a new and noble, world-wide Commonwealth of the Spirit in which man's age-old dreams of Brotherhood, Democracy, Peace and Soul Progress shall characterise the daily life of average people—in India, England, America and everywhere.

I wish I had confidence in my leadership on the world-platform. I have no false modesty about me. If I felt the call within, I would not wait a single second but straightway respond to an invitation so cordial as this. But with my limitations of which I am painfully conscious, I feel somehow that my experiment must be restricted to a fragment. What may be true of the fragment is likely to be true of the whole. It is true indeed that India's progress in the direction I desire seems to have come to a pause but I think that it only seems so. The little seed that was sown in 1920 has not perished. It is, I think, taking deep root. Presently it will come out as a stately tree. But if I am labouring under a delusion, I fear, that no artificial stimulus that my visit to America may temporarily bring can revive it. I am pining for the assistance

of the whole world. I see it coming. The urgent invitation is one of the many signs. But I know that we shall have to deserve it before it comes upon us like a mighty flood, a flood that cleanses and invigorates.

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*24th September. 1925*

## WHAT OF THE BRITISH LION?

BY M. K. GANDHI

Here is a letter all the way from California:

"Enclosed please find a small cutting. Read this cutting first:

"Kennedy was seated in the ranch house and happened to glance into the yard where his four-year-old grand daughter was playing. He saw a mountain lion stealthily creeping upon her. Kennedy rushed for his rifle and fired through the window at the lion as it was ready to spring. The bullet pierced its heart."

"Now give your opinion regarding the method used by the child's father. Please answer the following questions:

"Was he justified to kill the lion? Should the father remain non-violent and let the lion devour his child? Should the father appeal to the soul of the lion and thus endanger the life of his child? Was it possible for the father to plead mercy in order to save the child? Are you going to keep on appealing to the soul of the British lion and let them devour the lives of many million Indians?"

My answer to his first question is that the father was justified in killing the lion. In asking the other questions the correspondent has betrayed his ignorance of non-violence and its working. Non-violence is not so much a mental or intellectual attitude as a quality of the heart, the soul. If Kennedy had no fear of the lion—fearlessness being the first and indispensable condition of non-violence,—if he had a heart-recognition of the

fact that the lion possessed a soul as much as he himself did, instead of rushing to his rifle and relying upon the problematical chance of the lion waiting till he reached his rifle and of taking an unerring aim, he should have rushed to the lion and put his arms round him in the fullest confidence of being able to appeal to the soul within him and rescuing his child. That such non-violence is reached by the fewest possible is only too true, and therefore mankind in general will always kill lions and tigers in order to save their children and cattle. But the fundamental position remains unaffected. The phenomenon of real Sadhus fearlessly meeting and remaining unharmed without harming the wild beasts of the jungle is not an unknown thing in Hindustan. We have a historical record of such instances in the West also. The writer has further committed the error of imagining an unimaginable case with brave men. If Kennedy had remained a passive spectator of his child being devoured, the case would have been one not of non-violence in any shape or form but of rank and heartless cowardice, the very opposite of non-violence. The last question put by the correspondent is really what his letter is intended to lead up to. In it the correspondent has shown woeful ignorance of the history of our own times. He must know that the movement for which I have made myself responsible is not an appeal of the kind he imagines to the soul of the British lion, but it is an appeal to the soul of India to find itself. It is a movement to develop internal strength. In its final form, therefore, it is undoubtedly an appeal to the soul of the British lion. But it then becomes an appeal from an equal to an equal, not an appeal of a beggar to a possible donor, or the vain appeal of a dwarf to a giant to save him. It will then be an irresistible appeal of soul to soul. In the process of development of internal strength the inevitable devouring will no doubt go on. But it will not cease even when and if India rushes like Kennedy to the rifle. But whereas Kennedy tried to reach the rifle which he possessed and whose use he knew, the Indian Kennedy unlike the Californian would be trying to destroy the British lion without possessing the

necessary weapon or the skill to use it. Under my method, there is the present possibility not of destroying the British lion but of changing his nature. Again, under the Kennedy method India will have to develop the same qualities which we at present deplore in the British lion. Lastly, the third course which evidently the correspondent imagines to be not merely possible but the alternative to his method does not arise at all in the case of India, as it did not in the Californian case. India to be free has only two choices. She must either become, for the purpose of achieving her freedom and to that extent only, non-violent, or must endeavour to develop the Western methods of violence with all its implications.

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24th September, 1925

PRAYER .

BY M. K. GANDHI

‘Often, Sir, do you ask us to worship God, to pray but never tell us how to and whom to do so. Will you kindly enlighten me?’ asks a reader of *Navajivan*. Worshipping God is singing the praise of God. Prayer is a confession of ones unworthiness and weakness. God has a thousand names, or rather, He is Nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. Some call Him Rama, some Krishna, others call Him Rahim, and yet call Him God. All worship the same spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his associations, and He being the In-Dweller, All-Powerful and Omniscient knows our innermost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

Worship or prayer, therefore, is not to be performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that is why it can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammerer, by the ignorant and the stupid. And the prayers of those whose tongues are nectared

but whose hearts are full of poison are never heard. He, therefore, who would pray to God, must cleanse his heart. Rama was not only on the lips of Hanuman, He was enthroned in his heart. He gave Hanuman exhaustless strength. In His strength he lifted the mountain and crossed the ocean. It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased he is spiritually healthy, physically pure, he rolls in spiritual riches.

'But how is the heart to be cleansed to this extent? one might well ask. The language of the lips is easily taught but who can teach the language of the heart? Only the *bhakta*—the true devotee—knows it and can teach it. The Gita has defined the *bhakta* in three places, and talked of him generally everywhere. But a knowledge of the definition of a *bhakta* is hardly a sufficient guide. They are rare on this earth. I have therefore suggested the Religion of Service as the means. God of Himself seeks for His seat the heart of him who serves his fellowmen. That is why Narsinha Mehta who 'saw and knew' sang 'He is a true Vaishnav who knows to melt at other's woe.' Such was Abu Ben Adhem. He served his fellowmen, and therefore his name topped the list of those who served God.

But who are the suffering and the woe-begone? The suppressed and the poverty-stricken. He who would be a *bhakta*, therefore, must serve these by body, soul and mind. How can he who regards the 'suppressed' classes as untouchables serve them by the body? He who does not even condescend to exert his body to the extent of spinning for the sake of the poor, and trots out lame excuses does not know the meaning of service. An able-bodied wretch deserves no alms, but an appeal to work for his bread. Alms debase him. He 'who spins before the poor inviting them to do likewise serves God as no one else does. 'He who gives Me even a trifle as a fruit or a flower or even a leaf in the spirit of *Bhakti* is my servant' says the Lord in the Bhagwadgita. And he hath his

footstool where live 'the humble, the lowliest and lost,' Spinning, therefore for such is the greatest prayer the greatest worship, the greatest sacrifice.

Prayer, therefore, may be done by any name. A prayerful heart is the vehicle and service makes the heart prayerful. Those Hindus who in this age serve the untouchables from a full heart truly pray; the Hindu and those others who spin prayerfully for the poor and the indigent truly pray.

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*1st October, 1925*

## SIKHISM

BY M. K. GANDHI

During his visit to Patna for the A. I. C. C. Sardar Mangal Singh drew my attention to an article in *Young India* entitled 'My friend the revolutionary' in the issue dated 9th April last. He told me that many Sikh friends were offended because they thought I have described Guru Govind Singh as a misguided patriot whereas I had glorified Krishna. The Sardarji asked me to take an early opportunity of explaining what I meant by the passages he drew my attention to. The careful reader will note that my language is most guarded. I have made no positive assertion. All that I have said is that believing every statement made about the heroes mentioned including Guru Govind Singh to be true had I lived as their contemporary I would have called every one of them a misguided patriot. But in the very next sentence I have hastened to add that I must not judge them and that I disbelieve history as far as the details of the acts of the heroes are concerned. My belief about the Sikh Gurus is that they were all deeply religious teachers and reformers that they were all Hindus and that Guru Govind Singh was one of the greatest defenders of Hinduism. I believe too that he drew the sword in its defence. But I cannot judge his actions, nor can I use him as my model so far as his resort.

to the sword is concerned. What I would have done had I lived in his times and held the same views that I hold now I do not know. Such speculation I regard as perfect waste of time. I do not regard Sikhism as a religion distinct from Hinduism. I regard it as part of Hinduism and the reformation in the same sense that Vaishnavism is. I read in the Yeravda prison all the writings that I could lay my hands upon regarding the Sikhs. I read portions of Granth Saheb. Its deeply spiritual and moral tone I found to be uplifting. In the collection of hymns we have at the Ashram, we have some of Guru Nanak's also. At the same time I do not quarrel with the Sikhs for considering, if they wish, Sikhism as totally distinct from Hinduism. And when during my first visit to the Punjab a few Sikh friends told me that my reference to Sikhism as part of Hinduism displeased them, I ceased to refer to it as such. But the Sikh friends will pardon me for avowing my belief when I am asked to express my opinion about Sikhism.

Now about Krishna. Whilst I have dealt with the Gurus as historical personages about whose existence we have trustworthy records, I have no knowledge that the Krishna of Mahabharata ever lived. My Krishna has nothing to do with any historical person. I would refuse to bow my head to the Krishna who would kill because his pride is hurt, or the Krishna whom non-Hindus portray as a dissolute youth. I believe in Krishna of my imagination as a perfect incarnation, spotless in every sense of the word, the inspirer of the Gita and the inspirer of the lives of millions of human beings. But if it was proved to me that the Mahabharata is history in the same sense that modern historical books are, that every word of the Mahabharata is authentic and that the Krishna of the Mahabharata actually did some of the acts attributed to him, even at the risk of being banished from the Hindu fold I should not hesitate to reject that Krishna as God incarnate. But to me the Mahabharata is a profoundly religious book, largely allegorical, in no way meant to be a historical record. It is the description of the eternal duel going on within ourselves, given

so vividly as to make us think for the time being that the deeds described therein were actually done by the human beings. Nor do I regard the Mahabharata as we have it now as a faultless copy of the original. On the contrary I consider that it has undergone many amendations.

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*12th November, 1925*

### OUR IMPOTENCE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following letter \* has been addressed to me by Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari who have just returned from a prolonged tour on the Continent including Syria.

I could not see my way to accept their advice to send a cable to the League of Nations in the name of the Congress, and therefore sent the following answer :

“I have the letter signed by you and Hakim Saheb. What is the use of the Congress President sending a cable to the League of Nations? I feel like a caged lion, only with this difference that the lion foams and frets and gnashes his teeth and lashes the iron bars furiously in the vain attempt to be free, whereas I recognise my limitations and refuse to foam and fret. If we had any power behind us I would immediately send the cable suggested by you. Things I omit to mention in the pages of *Young India* are buried deep down in my bosom, and they are far weightier than those I advertise. But I do not fail to advertise them daily before the Unseen Power. When<sup>a</sup> I think of the horizon about us my heart becomes sick and weary. And when I listen to the still small voice within I derive hope and smile in spite of the conflagration raging round me. Do save me from having to advertise our impotence.”

But the next best thing I could do was to publish the

\* Omitted in this selection.



valuable letter and my reply. I do not believe in making appeals when there is no force behind them, whether moral or material. Moral force comes from the determination of the appellants to do something, to sacrifice something for the sake of making their appeal effective. Even children instinctively know this elementary principle. They starve, they cry, or, if they are naughty, they do not hesitate to strike their mothers who will not grant their peremptory demands. Unless we recognise and are prepared to reduce to practice this principle we can but expose the Congress and ourselves to ridicule if not worse.

We cannot be naughty even if we will. We *can* suffer if *only* we will. I want us as Indians, Hindus or Mussalmans, Christians or Parsis, or Asiatics to realise our impotence in the face of this humiliation, barbarity. Dyerism, or call it what you will, inflicted on Syria. A definite realisation of our impotence might teach us to imitate, if it is only the animals who in the presence of stormy weather come close together and seek warmth and courage from one another. They do not make a vain appeal to the god of the weather to moderate his wrath. They simply provide against it.

And we, Hindus and Mussalmans fight against one another and the gulf seems to be daily widening. We have not yet understood the meaning of the Charkha. Those that have find all kinds of pretexts not to wear Khaddar and not to spin. The storm is raging round us. And instead of seeking warmth one from the other, we prefer to shiver or petition the god of storms to stay his hand. If I cannot bring about Hindu-Muslim union or persuade the people to take up the wheel, I have the wisdom at least not to sign any petition for mercy.

And what is the League of Nations? Is it not in reality merely England and France? Do the other powers count? Is it any use appealing to France which is denying her motto of Fraternity, Equality and Justice? She has denied justice to Germany, there is little fraternity between her and the Riffs, and the doctrine of equality she is trampling under foot in

Syria. If we would appeal to England, we need not go to the League of Nations. She is much nearer home. She is perched on the heights of Simla except when she descends to Delhi for a brief period. But to appeal to her is to appeal to Caesar against Augustus.

Let us then perceive the truth in its nakedness and learn to appeal to the nation to do her duty. Relief of Syria lies through India. And if we cannot appreciate our greatness let us confess our littleness and say nothing. But we need not be little. Let us do at least one thing thoroughly—either fight to the bitter end, even as our brothers the four-footed animals often do, or, as men let us learn and teach through co-operation on the largest scale known to the world the uselessness, nay, the sinfulness of exploitation of those weaker than ourselves. That co-operation among millions is possible only through the spinning wheel.

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*19th November, 1925*

## OUR INSANITATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

During my wanderings nothing has been so painful to me as to observe our insanitation throughout the length and breadth of the land. I do not believe in the use of force for carrying out reforms, but when I think of the time that must elapse before the ingrained habits of millions of people can be changed, I almost reconcile myself to compulsion in this the most important matter of insanitation. Several diseases can be directly traced to insanitation. Hookworm for instance is such a direct result. Not a single human being who observes the elementary principles of sanitation need suffer from hookworm. The disease is not even due to poverty. The only reason is gross ignorance of the first principles of sanitation.

These reflections arise from the abominations I saw in Mandvi. The people of Mandvi are not poor. They cannot be

classed as ignorant. And yet their habits are dirty beyond description. Men and women dirty the streets that they walk on with bare feet. They do this every morning. There is practically no such thing as a closet in that port. It was with the greatest difficulty that I was able to pass through these streets.

Let me not be hard on the poor inhabitants of Mandvi. I know that I saw nothing better in many streets of Madras. The sight of grown up people lining the river banks and after the performance proceeding with criminal thoughtlessness to the river and cleaning themselves in it and injecting into its sacred water typhoid, cholera and dysentery germs has not yet faded from memory. This is the water that is used also for drinking. In the Punjab we violate God's laws by dirtying our roofs and breeding millions of flies. In Bengal the same tank quenches the thirst of man and beast and cleanses him and his pots. But I must not continue this description of our shame. Seeing that it is there, it would be sinful to hide it. But I dare not carry it any further, I know I have underdrawn the picture.

I would urge the enterprising people of Mandvi to lead the way in model sanitation. Let them, whether the State help them or not, call in a specialist and spent money in improving their sanitation so as to make it perfect. 'Cleanliness is next to godliness.' We can no more gain God's blessings with an unclean body than with an unclean mind. A clean body cannot reside in an unclean city.

Let us not put off everything till Swaraj is attained and thus put of Swaraj itself. Swaraj can be had only by brave and clean people. Whilst the Government has to answer for a lot, I know that the British officers are not responsible for our insanitation. Indeed if we gave them free scope in this matter, they would improve our habits at the point of the sword. They do not do so, because it does not pay. But they would gladly welcome and encourage any effort towards improved sanitation. In this matter Europe has much to teach us. We quote with pride a few texts from Manu or if we are Mussalmans from the

Quran. We do not carry even these into practice. Europeans have deduced an elaborate code of sanitation from the principles laid down in these books. Let us learn these from them and adapt them to our needs and habits. How I would love to see not ornamental but useful sanitary associations whose members will deem it a privilege to take up the broom, the shovel and the bucket. Here is great national work for school boys, school girls and collegiates all over India.

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*19th November, 1925*

A CRY FROM GERMANY

BY M. K. GANDHI

Boro Dada has received a letter from Germany from which I take the following :

"Corruption cries to the sky. All bad men live in wealth but all good men have a hard struggle to fight out; the poorest of all are we town clerks, for our salary is very small, 35 dollars a month, and so is our life a perpetual starvation.

I often desire fervently to come and see India, to sit at the feet of Mr. Gandhi. I am quite alone. I have neither wife nor children. A poor sick niece who has none but me keeps my house. I should become a priest, if there was not my poor niece. I cannot leave her in misery. However I am an academian. I have studied classical and modern foreign languages. I have also studied Mysticism and Buddhism. I cannot find a better place nor a better salary. That is so in the Germany of today.

"Before the terrible war 15 years ago I was an independent man, an investigator; now—after the terrible decline in value of our money-standard I am a beggar like a thousand other learned men in Germany. Now I am 45 years old and you cannot think, how desperate and hopeless

I am, what a great disgust I feel in Europe. Here the men have no soul and are wild beasts, who devour one another. Could I go to India? Could I become an Indian philosopher? I believe in India and I hope India will save us."

The opening lines of this letter might well have been written by any Indian clerk. His position is no better than the German clerk's. In India too 'bad men live in wealth and good men have a hard struggle to fight out'. It is therefore a case of 'distance lending enchantment to the view'. Friends like this German writer must be warned against regarding India as better than Germany or any other country. Let him realise that riches are no test of goodness. Indeed poverty often is the only test. A good man voluntarily embraces poverty. If the writer was at one time in affluent circumstances Germany was at that time exploiting other countries. The remedy lies with every individual in every country. Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances. The writer says that but for his poor niece he might have become a priest. This seems to me to be a distorted view. It would almost appear that the writer's present state is somewhat better than that of a priest of his imagination. For now he has at least one poor person to look after. Under the priestly licence he would have none to look after! The fact however is that as a true priest he would have hundreds of nieces and even nephews to look after. As a priest the sphere of his responsibility would be as wide as that of the universe. Whereas now he slaves for himself and his niece, as a priest he would be expected to slave for the whole of distressed mankind. I would then venture to advise this friend and others like him without adopting the clerical robe to identify themselves with all in distress. They would then have all the advantages of the priestly calling without being exposed to its terrible temptations.

The German friend would like to become an Indian

philosopher. I assure him that there are no territorial distinctions in philosophy. An Indian philosopher is as good or as bad as a European philosopher.

One thing the writer in my opinion has guessed somewhat correctly. Though India has her share of wild and soulless two-footed beasts probably the tendency of the average Indian mind is to discard the wild beast in it. And it is my certain conviction that if India retains the way she chose in 1921, Europe has reason to hope much from India. She chose then with the greatest deliberation the way of truth and peace and symbolised it in her acceptance of the Charkha and Non-co-operation with all that was evil. From all I know of her she has not yet rejected it and is not likely to.

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*26th November, 1935*

‘OUR TIME A TRUST!’

Often in these columns have I reported Gandhiji having said to various audiences on various occasions that our time is a trust. But the lesson was burnt deep into me the other day only when I myself happened to be the offender. I have often laughed at these people's expense. Let them laugh today at mine.

Outwardly it is a story of how I began and ended the study of French. It is really a story of my own humiliation and shame which is all the deeper, because ‘how much the more and the better thou knowest, so much the more rigorously shalt thou therefore be judged.’ The desire of learning French had possessed me ever since I went to jail, but Urdu had rightly a better claim, especially where the opportunities of learning it were so great. And I knew that to learn Urdu or Hindustani, our *lingua franca*, was a duty, whilst the other was no more than ‘a desire of knowing’. And yet the desire was there, and lifted up its head whenever there was an opportunity. I saw

one in the arrival at our Ashram of Miss Madeleine Slade and lost no time in seizing it. She has come to serve, to give and not to take, and the moment she said she would love to be of some service to me, I expressed my desire to learn French. 'Certainly,' she said, and without the least little thought I started on my study. The first lesson on the articles and simple verbs was given, and I eagerly went for the second. To have learnt to understand sentences as 'Ce mot est tres difficile' and 'Ce mot n'est pas si difficile' after only one day of study was a thing to be proud of. I asked my teacher whether Gandiji knew that I had begun French. She said, he did and that 'he was amused and surprised.' 'Surprised' gave me a sort of alarm and I began to imagine in my mind what was coming. And scarcely had I finished the second lesson when the message came that I was wanted by Gandhiji.

I went, of course, in fear and trembling, though hardly prepared for all that followed. There was some casual inquiry and I thought only my conscience had made a coward of me. But no. The storm came almost as soon as I had begun to re-assure myself. 'So you have begun French?' he asked smiling, disguising all his indignation. I smiled an affirmative answer. 'I thought, when she was making the appointment with you yesterday, that you were going to her to give her a lesson in Hindi. But she told me this morning, as I asked her how she had spent her time. that she gave you a French lesson for an hour. Do you know what I told her?' he asked, still smiling. 'Yes' I said, 'she told me you were amused and surprised.' 'Well then,' said he 'I tell you what I said. I said Ceasar aimed at the crown and failed,' And then began a volley of questions. 'What have you begun learning French for? Because Miss Slade, a French scholar, is here? Or you want to read Romain Rolland in French? Or to read our French correspondence?' 'No I have been long wanting to learn French. French knowing friends told me that it was easy to learn the language, and useful too.' 'Well,' he said rather sternly now. 'do you know that not all

Englishmen know French, and the best of them are content to read the French authors in translations? And much of the best French literature is turned into English as soon as it is published.' There was a pause for a minute or two. 'How long do you think you will take to learn it?' 'About six months,' I am told. 'How many hours?' 'An hour each day.' 'Regularly?' 'Yes.' 'Do you think you can get an hour each day whilst we tour about?' 'Hardly, but I think I might snatch some time whilst actually travelling.' 'Indeed?' 'Are you sure?' I hesitated. 'And now that you want to learn French, I must keep you free each day for an hour, should I not? This was more than I could bear. 'No', said I energetically, 'you need not. I shall find time somehow.' 'You will not find time,' he said, now driving the point home, 'you will *steal* time.' I was silenced. 'Don't you think so?' he asked expecting a confession. 'I do' said I, 'I could give to spinning all the time I give to French.' 'Yes; there is many another thing. But when we are engaged in a life and death struggle, how could you think of learning French? You may read as much French as you like after Swaraj. But until then—'

'I stop it from today.' I said expecting to be forgiven and allowed to go. 'But that is not all,' he said. 'The charge sheet is not yet over. Do you know that Miss Slade has come here, having burnt all her boats? Do you know that' her sacrifice for our cause is greater than that of any one of us? Do you know that she is here to learn and study and serve and give all her time to the service of our people and thereby her own people, and that nothing that happens at her own home will swerve her from her appointed task here? Every minute of her time is therefore doubly precious and it is for us to give her as much as we can. She wants to know every thing about us, she must master Hindustani. How else is she to do it unless we help her in making the best of her time? She may be quite willing to oblige us, but our duty is to give her as much as we can. Our own time is sacred enough. Here is a more sacred trust. Rather than indulge in the luxury of learning French,



I would expect you to give her an hour in Hindi, Sanskrit or such other thing.'

Clearly there was no answer for me. I hung down my head in shame. My speechlessness was an eloquent confession of my blunder. Was there any penance I might make? It was unwise to ask him. It should suggest itself to me. But his unfailing kindness had already forgiven me and he himself suggested the penance. 'So go again tomorrow at the same hour and tell her your mistake, and take up reading Hindi hymns with her instead of French.'

M. D.

[Censored and passed though not without considerable hesitation

M. K. G.]

### BORODADA GONE

It is difficult to believe that Dwijendranath Tagore is no more. A wire from Shantiniketan gives me the sad news that Borodada known as Dwijendranath Tagore has found his rest. He was nearing ninety and yet he was so bright, so cheerful that one could never feel whilst in his presence that his days of earthly existence were numbered. Borodada was a distinguished member in that family of geniuses. Besides being a great scholar—as familiar with Sanskrit as he was with English—Borodada was a deeply religious man of broad sympathies. Whilst he held tenaciously to the teachings of the Upanishads, he was open to receive light from all the other scriptures of the world. He loved his country with the passion of a most devoted patriot. Yet his patriotism was not exclusive. He understood the spiritual beauty of non-violent non-co-operation, though he never failed to appreciate its political significance. He believed in the spinning wheel with a full heart and had adopted Khaddar even at his ripe age. He kept himself in closest touch with the current events with the ardour of a youth. Borodada's death means the withdrawal of a youth. Borodada's death means the withdrawal of a great sage, philosopher and patriot from our midst. I tender my condolences to the Poet and the members of the Ashram at Shantiniketan.

M. K. G.

*21st January, 1926*

## ANOTHER INVITATION

Mrs. Langeloth and Mrs. Kelly, delegated personally to present to Gandhiji the resolution of invitation to visit America on behalf of the Fellowship of Faiths, League of Neighbours, and Union of East and West, visited him last week. They were evidently prepared for the reply, but the resolution had to be presented. Not without considerable hesitation said Mrs. Kelly: 'Would you not visit America, Mr. Gandhi? We would very much like to hear from you your message. Money, I know, is no consideration to you, but I may say that your visit can help us to render you pecuniary assistance in your work here. There are private homes there ready to receive you and to look after you whilst you are there.' 'I know' said Gandhiji, 'I would be overwhelmed with affection if ever I went to America. But as I have already explained to other friends I cannot as yet think of going there, without having finished my work here. I must work away amongst my own people, and not swerve from my path. Dr. Ward writing to me the other day said he was entirely at one with me in thinking that my visit would not be of much use in the present circumstances. And don't you think he is right? I know crowds would gather around me to hear me, I would get receptions everywhere, but beyond that my visit would have no other result.' 'Don't you think, Mr. Gandhi, we are ready to receive your message?' rejoined Mrs. Kelly. 'Look at the gathering under the auspices of Fellowship of Faiths. No less than ten faiths were represented there, and when a lecture about you was broadcasted millions listened to it with intense interest. Mr. John Haynes Holmes also earnestly desires you to pay a visit. We are growing, and we would like to accelerate the growth.' 'I know,' said Gandhiji, 'you are growing. But a gentle steady growth would be more enduring than growth induced by lecturing campaigns and fire works display. You must, at present, study my message through my writings and try

to live up to it if it is acceptable to you. I could not hope to make you live up to it unless I have succeeded in making my own people do it. Every moment of my time is therefore usefully employed here and I would be doing violence to my inner being if I left my work and proceeded to America.

Mrs. Kelly and Mrs. Langeloth seemed to be convinced and they now turned to putting a question or two before they left. 'Mr. Gandhi, is it true that you are a reactionary? I have heard some of your own people say so.' 'What do they mean by 'reactionary?'' asked Gandhiji, 'If they mean that I am a civil resister and law-breaker I have been that all these years. If they mean that I have discarded all other methods and adopted Non-violence, symbolised by the spinning wheel, they are right.' Mrs. Kelley could not say, but I could well guess what was at the back of her mind from the questions that followed. In his remarkable autobiography Henry Ford refers to a species of reformers whom he calls 'reactionary' meaning thereby those who want to go back to an old order of things. And Mrs. Kelley's next question was, 'Is it true that you object to railways, steamships and other means of speedy locomotion?' 'It is and it is not said Gandhiji, with a smile, 'You should really get the book in which I have expounded my views in this connection—*Indian Home Rule*. It is true in the sense that under ideal conditions we should not need these things. It is not true in the sense that in these days it is not easy to sever ourselves from those things. But is the world any the better for those quick instruments of locomotion? How do these instruments advance man's spiritual progress? Do they not in the last resort hamper it? And is there any limit to man's ambition? Once we were satisfied with travelling a few miles an hour, to-day we want to negotiate hundreds of miles in an hour, one day we might desire to fly through space. What will be the result? Chaos—we would be tumbling upon one another, we would be simply smothered.

'But do masses desire these things?' put in Mrs. Kelly.

'They do' maintained Gandhiji. 'I have seen mobs getting

almost mad on Sundays and holidays. In London a long unbreakable train of motor cars at every corner is quite an usual phenomenon. And what is all this worry and fateful hurry for? To what end? I tell you if by some sudden catastrophe all these instruments were to be destroyed I would not shed a single tear. I would say, it is a proper storm and a proper cleansing.'

'But supposing you need to go to Calcutta, how would you go unless by train?' asked Mrs. Kelley.

'Certainly by train. But why should I need to go to Calcutta? Under ideal conditions, as I have said, I need not traverse those long distances, not at any rate in the shortest possible time. I shall explain myself. Today two good people come from America with a kind and loving message. But along with the two come two hundred with all sorts of motives. For aught we know a large number may be coming just in search of further avenues of exploitation. Is that the benefit of quick locomotion to India?

'I see' said Mrs. Kelly, 'but how can we get back to the ideal condition of things?'

'Not easily. It is an express moving at a terrific speed. that we are in. We cannot all of a sudden jump out of it. We cannot go back to the ideal state all at a jump. We can look forward to reaching it some day.'

In short the reactionary turn, if at all it was, meant a return to commonsense, meant a restoration of what appears to commonsense to be a natural order as distinguished from the present unnatural order, in a word not everything overturned or everything petrified but everything restored to its proper place.

But I do not think the friends quite saw the drift of the argument. For they too were hurrying through space. They had to catch a train, and were afraid to get to the station too late!

M. D..

*4th February, 1926*

## A PATRIOT'S WAIL

BY M. K. GANDHI

A friend has thus unbosomed himself :

"In your weeklies you write nothing about the agriculturists, who form the bulk of the population of India. In most parts of India the agriculturist is a mere tenant, at the mercy of the Zamindar, and dragging on a miserable existence. Do not you think these Zamindars and Talukdars are a pest in the country? Cannot we solve the problem by dispossessing these Zamindars and distributing their land among the poor?"

"The headman and the sowkar are another pest. They exploit the poor agriculturist on all occasions.

"The agriculturist himself does not know his own interests. Everywhere in Gujarat he has taken to growing cotton, and has thus made food-stuffs dear. Could not the Swarajists get some legislation passed requiring them not to exceed 5 *bighas* of cotton cultivation? India needs only two million bales of cotton. Why should we grow six instead? Cannot we carry on a village propaganda for concentrating more on the cultivation of food-crops?"

"The Patidars in Gujarat are mad after tobacco cultivation. And for whose benefit? Possibly we are more responsible for the vice of smoking than any other part of India. Can we not persuade them to grow fruit-trees instead?"

"And why do not you say something strong about our miserable widows? Their orthodox parents or guardians are never going to listen to reason. Why not encourage the widows to take the initiative?"

"And then there are our numerous evil customs and usages, our wretched dowry system, our postnuptial and post-mortem dinners and so on.

"And what a woeful number of subcastes?"

"Why not resume bonfires and picketting of foreign cloth?"

I have boiled down a very long letter which, though rambling, is the cry of an agonised soul.

I have not been writing much about the agriculturists advisedly. For I know that it is impossible for us to do anything for them to-day. There are a thousand and one things that need to be done for the amelioration of the lot of the agriculturists. But so long as the reins of Government are not in the hands of the agriculturists' representatives *i. e.* so long as we have no *Swaraj—Dharmaraj*—that amelioration is very difficult if not impossible. I know that the peasant is dragging a miserable existence and hardly gets even a scanty meal a day. That is why I have suggested the revival of the spinning wheel.

And the need for internal reform is as great as that for legislative reform. And internal reform can be only partly achieved when numerous volunteers are found to take up village-work as the mission of their lives. The evil habits of ages cannot go in a year or two.

We may not forcibly dispossess the Zamindars and Talukdars of their thousands of *bigahas*. And among whom shall we distribute them? We need not dispossess them. They only need a change of the heart. When that is done, and when they learn to melt at their tenants' woe, they will hold their lands in trust for them, will give them a major part of the produce, keeping only sufficient for themselves. 'We had better wait for that day until the Greek Kalends' some one will say. I do not think so. I think that the world is moving towards peace *i. e.* Ahimsa. The way of violence has been tried for ages and has been found wanting. Let no one believe that the people in Russia, Italy, and other countries are happy or are independent. The sword of Damocles is always hanging over their heads. Those who have the good of the Indian agriculturists at heart, must pin their faith on non-violence and plod on. Those who think of other methods are vainly flattering themselves with hope of success. The agriculturists never figures in their calculations, or at any rate they do not know his condition.

What I have said above applies equally to the *sowkar* and.

other exploiters. Nothing but their own profit appeals to them. But there too the remedy is the moral education of both. The oppressed need no other education except in Satyagraha and non-co-operation. A slave is a slave because he consents to slavery. If training in physical resistance is possible, why should that in spiritual resistance be impossible? If we know the use of the body, why can we not know the use and power of the soul?

Till he is educated who can persuade the agriculturist to limit or stop his cultivation of cotton and tobacco?

And reform of immoral customs and usages? How can it be brought about? By lectures? Here too an education of popular conscience is necessary. Those whose consciences are awake should act according to their convictions and accept the consequences. We may before long look forward to a measure of fusion of sub-castes.

Smoking is in a way a greater curse than drink, in as much as the victim does not realise its evil in time. It is not regarded as a sign of barbarism, it is even acclaimed by civilised people. I can only say, let those who can, give it up and set the example.

Remarriage of widows is necessary to a certain extent. The reform can be brought about only when our youths have purified themselves. Are they pure? Do they profit by their education? Or why blame their education? From childhood up a slave-mentality is sedulously cultivated in us. And if we cannot think freely how can we act freely? We are alike slaves of the caste, of a foreign education, and of an alien Government. Every one of the facilities provided us have become our fetters. There are so many educated youths amongst us. How few of them have thought of the lot of the widows in their own homes? How few have resisted the temptation of lucre? How few regard them as their own sisters and mothers and protect their honour? How few have had the courage of their convictions and defied their castes to do their worst. Whom is the poor widow to approach? What comfort can I bring her? How few of them are readers of *Navajivan*?

How few even of those who read it can act upto their convictions? And yet I have occasionally devoted the columns of *Navajivan* to the widows' wail and hope to do more as opportunity offers itself. In the meantime I would appeal to everyone who has a child widow under his care to consider it his duty to marry her.

The correspondent has cast a lurid light on our social customs. But when the whole body is rotten, how can we be satisfied with a few patches here and there? Post-mortem dinners are barbarous. But post-nuptial dinners are no less so. We might consider the latter to be less barbarous, because the religious ceremony of marriage is, all the world over, an expensive affair, more or less. But the Hindus alone have the monopoly of having post-mortem dinners! These and other matters badly need attention. But a reform all over will come with the awakening of the moral consciousness of our people and with the liberation of their thought. So long as our thought and action are not free, patch-work will be worse than useless.

The last item in the correspondent's wail is about the resumption of burning and picketting 'of foreign cloth. If some one could assure me that the people will burn only their own foreign clothing, and will not touch others', I would again appeal to the nation to make bonfires of foreign cloth. I have never doubted the propriety of these bonfires. But I have a genuine dread of people resorting to violence. When even a thing springing from love and non-violence is abused, we must take it that time is not ripe for placing it before the public. And when I saw in Bombay with my own eyes people wearing foreign cloth wresting it from others and consigning it to flames I recalled the weapon. Today when the ugliest of our passions have come to the surface, all peaceful experiments also must be reduced to a minimum. That is why I have pitched my waggon to only one star—spinning and weaving and propagating Khaddar—where abuse is unthinkable, and where there is no possibility of any harm being done. Those who want *Swaraj*



or *Dharmaraj* for India by peaceful methods must pursue this unfailing remedy as a principal duty.

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11th February, 1926

FROM SWEDEN

BY M. K. GANDHI

Thus writes a Swedish correspondent :

"It is a great joy to me to get your paper every week and it seems to me as if I stood in constant contact with you. I see that you answer in *Young India* questions from people in distant countries, and wonder if you will also answer questions from me. . . Will you tell me in your paper if you still adhere to your first programme in all its parts? Papers say you have changed your opinions about several points, but you are as eager as ever for non-co-operation? In our biggest paper there has been an article about you and I translate on a separate paper the principal points. I think they prove a very great want of insight in India's present situation. People don't seem to understand that since the English have tried to trample out every aspect of greatness in the character of the masses they cannot in one day, month or year regain all they have lost. There must be a rebuilding *from where they stand*. It is slow work but what a glorious material to work upon!

"I wonder if I dare trouble you with answering in *Young India* what I translate from the article. I should like to enlighten the public about your real opinion. . . I think your spinning wheel is a foundation on which India's liberation, economic well-being and, as a product, spiritual 'renaissance,' is to be built.

"If I have been too presuming, I ask you to forgive me. We have in our Bible a sentence 'Love drives away fear' and I have loved India and its people for nearly forty years—that's my only excuse for writing you as I do."

The following is the extract translation sent by the correspondent :

"Gandhi embodies in his fanatical spiritual imperialism and his hatred to Western civilisation the reactionary India. His ideal is the ancient isolated village communities whose idyllic separateness from the outer world was a result of the economic independence. To regain this Gandhi recommends home spinning as a way out from the bonds of Western civilisation. At the same time he is carrying on the most evident bread-earning politics, claims the entire disappearance of the British from public service, control over every department of administration, the army and foreign politics too etc. In this struggle to place Indians as workers in the modern state-system Gandhi works manifestly dead against his own principles. More than with Tilak and other predecessors there are with Gandhi, I am certain, for the realisation of the programme, fateful circumstances. Gandhi's judgment of the Western civilisation seems to him who has studied the methods of agitation of this so influential man ill advised. It is not exaggeration to assert that the political vitality in India depends in the highest degree on a manifestation of Western civilisation, *i. e.* the railways. These have been the means to bring about the agitatory summons to the campaigns of home spinning, the frequent Congresses, the meetings of the leaders at different places and times. When Gandhi condemns the Western institutions he therefore gets into a vicious circle. The means which make possible the agitation for isolation and going back to old customs and social forms lead in reality farther and farther away from the orthodox ideals. And a third contradiction makes itself felt in Gandhism.

"We have shown how Gandhi preaching the ideal of renunciation and the silent contemplation, at the same time carries on eager breadwinner politics and how his all-embracing agitation assumes just the order of things that he wants to do away with. A third contradiction shows itself in Gandhi's behaviour concerning the castes. Gandhi naturally strives for a

social order suited for the economic ideal, the independence of the village community which he teaches. The old caste institution must consequently have an absolute defender in Gandhi. But this is not the case. On several points, especially concerning the untouchables, Gandhi has declared an opinion different from the orthodox standpoint. He thus works to help the modern time. It is clear that a movement so full of contradictions and strange things as the integral nationalisms and its last offspring Gandhism cannot produce anything of importance. The boycott against the legislative councils, the schools, law-courts and goods from the mills, has completely failed.

“The judgment of the programme of the Hindu orthodox circles and their politics cannot be favourable. Their agitation has not been useless. But the effects have not been those wanted. The movement for Indian independence has not given up the contact with the Western world. The swift Indianising of public service, of the industries, the admittance of the lower castes to the schools etc,—significant events in the Indian politics,—do not point that way. With a paradoxical sharpening of the present situation one may characterise the two great programmes in Indian politics, the orthodox and the radical, thus : that the orthodox scheme may be considered as a failure but because of its agitation very important for the modernising of India, the radical programme as practically possible to realise and very valuable, but in consequence of the conciliating attitude of its adherents unable to realise itself without the powerful help of the integral nationalism.”

As to the question embodied in the letter, I must repeat what I have said in these columns before that I retain my faith intact in the original programme of non-co-operation. I also feel that it has done a distinct service to the national cause. The institutions attacked do not retain the glamour they had before. But I recognise that the reaction too has been great and that many of those who were concerned with the institu-

tions in question have gone back to them. But I am confident that at the proper time the whole programme is bound to be revived, in a modified form it may be, but retaining its essential character. Meanwhile as a practical man I help my old comrades in every humble way I can without sacrificing my own principles or practice.

As for the extract from the Swedish newspaper, it betrays the usual ignorance of my motives and actions. I am not concerned with doing away with the railways. The spread of the spinning-wheel I hold to be quite consistent with the existence of the railways. The spinning wheel is designed to revive the national cottage industry and thus bring about a natural and equitable distribution of the wealth derivable from the largest industry next only to agriculture and thereby stop the double evil of enforced idleness and pauperism. Nor have I ever suggested or contemplated the turning out of the English from India. What I do contemplate is a radical change in the English outlook upon the government of India. The present unnatural and degrading system of subtle slavery must be changed at any cost. There is no room for Englishmen as masters. There is room for them if they will remain as friends and helpers. The writer of the article simply does not understand the grand implications of the removal of untouchability. He cannot perceive that its removal is calculated to purge Hinduism of the greatest evil that has crept into it, without touching the great system of division of work. It is difficult, it must be admitted, for busy men looking at the great movement from a distance to observe the unfamiliar but vital core beneath the temporary but familiar crust overlaying it. It is difficult for them also not to mistake the husk for the kernel. The movement of non-violent non-co-operation has nothing in common with the historical struggles for freedom in the West. It is not based on brute force or hatred. It does not aim at destroying the tyrant. It is a movement of self-purification. It therefore seeks to convert the tyrant. It may fail because India may not be ready for mass non-violence. But it would be wrong to judge the movement

by false standards. My own opinion is that the movement has in no wise failed. Non-violence has found an abiding place in India's struggle for freedom. That the programme could not be finished in a year's time merely shows that the people could not cope with a mighty upheaval during such a short time. But it is a leaven which is silently but surely working its way among the masses.

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*11th March, 1926*

### WHY NOT VISIT AMERICA

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :—

“You are refusing invitations from America. Of course you know better than I whether the time is really opportune or not. Yet I cannot make out why you should not visit the New World. Your one and main ground is that you have not yet been completely successful in your own land amongst your own people. But success or failure should be judged by God alone. Do you mean to say that the movement of Non-violence inaugurated by you has not yet been firmly established? Truth supports truth. Would you differ from me in holding that this movement requires a world-wide campaign? And America and India—should they not be alike to you in respect of Truth and Non-violence?

“I should cite one or two instances as well in this connection. Our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be on Him) did not, when necessary, hesitate to accept the help of His followers from Medina though outside Mecca, His own birth-place. More recently Swami Vivekananda found a better field in America to proclaim his message to the world.

“And again, if to materialise the success of Khaddar

movement stands in your way, you know that you can collect funds from America. Why not make a condition (to yourself at least) that you must collect for Khaddar from America this or that amount of rupees. "Give and take" must have its sway. If funds be sufficient at the back of Khaddar movement its popularity and success will not be long coming."

This is one out of many received by me pressing me to accept the invitation from America. My reason is simple. I have not enough self-confidence to warrant my going to America. I have no doubt that the movement of Non-violence has come to stay. I have no doubt whatsoever about its final success : but I cannot give an ocular demonstration of the efficacy of Non-violence. Till then I feel that I must continue to preach from the narrower Indian platform. There is no analogy between the illustrations cited and my case. But in any case the Prophet and Swami felt the call. I do not as yet.

The success of Khaddar rests not merely upon sufficiency of funds. There are many factors whose co-ordination is necessary for the stabilization of Khaddar. If ever I go to America, it will not be with the intention of collecting funds for any Indian movement with which I may be connected. India must shoulder her own burden and if America feels the call to help she would do so not on the principle of 'give and take' but independently. My visit and America's help must each stand on its own merits.

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*25th March, 1926*

‘EXERCISE THE COPYRIGHT’

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes :

"Your permission to newspaper proprietors to copy, if they wish, the chapters of your autobiography seems to me to be prejudicial to the circulation of *Young India* as well as

*Navajivan*. Having observed the commercial spirit in the newspaper world, I have arrived at the opinion that it is not right for you to permit the newspapers to copy those chapters. People will then for the purpose of reading the autobiography subscribe to *Young India* and *Navajivan* who are not now subscribers and read the other articles contained in them. Why lose this opportunity of broad-casting your message and why be a sharer in the sins of broad-casting liquor and other questionable advertisements such as French art, invigorating and vitalising medicines, obscene books and 'short stories'? This is not only my opinion but that of many readers of *Young India*."

Whilst I appreciate the benevolent motive underlying this advice, I cannot help saying that I am unconvinced of the soundness of the advice. I have never yet copy-righted any of my writings. Tempting offers have come to me no doubt in connection with the chapters of the autobiography, if such they may be called, and I am likely to succumb to the temptation for the sake of the cause I stand for. But even so, I dare not be exclusive. Writings in the journals which I have the privilege of editing must be common property. Copy-right is not a natural thing. It is a modern institution, perhaps desirable to a certain extent. But I have no wish to inflate the circulation of *Young India* or *Navajivan* by forbidding newspapers to copy the chapters of the autobiography. The message I seek to deliver through the pages of *Young India* or *Navajivan* must stand on its own bottom and I am satisfied with the number of subscribers who buy these journals for the message that they stand for and not for any temporary interest that might be created in writings such as the autobiography. Nor am I able to subscribe to the opinion that by not availing myself of the statutory right of prohibiting the publication of anything I may write in the pages of these journals, I become a sharer in the sins of those newspaper proprietors who take in the advertisements referred to by the correspondent, I do from the bottom of my heart detest these advertisements. I do hold that it is

wrong to conduct newspapers by the aid of these immoral advertisements. I do believe that if advertisements should be taken at all there should be a rigid censorship instituted by newspaper proprietors and editors themselves and that only healthy advertisements should be taken. But I no more become a sharer in the crime of taking immoral advertisements by refraining from making use of the law of copy-right, than I do by not walking to their offices and engaging the proprietors in a duel if they will not remove the offending advertisements. The evil of immoral advertisements is overtaking even what are known as the most respectable newspapers and magazines. That evil has to be combated by refining the conscience of the newspaper proprietors and editors. That refinement can come not through the influence of an amateur editor like myself but it will come when their own conscience is roused to recognition of the growing evil or when it is super-imposed upon them by a government representing the people and caring for the people's morals.

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*15th April, 1926*

## HOW TO HELP?

BY M. K. GANDHI

An Indian Correspondent living in London writes :

"Every person asks me how people who live in America, Germany, France, Italy as well as England can help the Indian cause? What can they do to help us in our fight for Swaraj? They ask further what can India teach the world? Has she any message to the people who are fighting? And, if so, what can she contribute towards creating world peace?"

The first question is easily answered. If even God only helps those who help themselves, how would people, imperfect as they are, help one another unless they are prepared to help themselves? But after all there is something in creating a sane



world opinion. There is no doubt that that opinion is daily growing in influence. The chapters, which I am reproducing in a somewhat condensed form from Mr. Page's pamphlet, show clearly how people were led into error by mis-education. They were fed during the war on diabolical lies by their respective governments. I have therefore suggested to every European friend who has been good enough to visit the Ashram to study our movement, not from newspaper reports, which are ill-informed where they are not interested, but from original writings. It grieves me to have to say that the British Government agency, both public and secret, is spreading a wholly incorrect view of the situation. No Indian patriotic agency can possibly overtake the lies spread by this highly organized and lavishly paid secret service from whose attention even the great Poet of Asia, indeed of the world, has not been free. It is only impartial and sober representatives of the respective European countries and America who can, if at all, controvert the statements that are being broadcasted on behalf of the British Government.

The second question is more difficult to answer.

If the question had been, what has India taught to the world, I could have referred the questioner to Max Muller's book 'What can India teach us ?' But the question here put is not in terms of the past of India but in terms of her present. I must then frankly confess that at the present moment India can teach the world little. She is trying to develop ability to vindicate her liberty by means strictly non-violent and truthful. Some of us who are in the movement have an undying faith in those means, but it is not possible in an instant to transmit that faith to people outside India. It is not possible to say that that faith is even the common property of educated India. But there is no doubt that if India succeeds in regaining her liberty through non-violent means, she would have delivered her message to the others who are fighting for it, and what is perhaps more, she would have made the largest contribution yet known to the world peace.

13th May, 1926

## THE CATTLE PROBLEM

BY M. K. GANDHI

Some months ago the Collector of Ganjam Mr. A. Galletti sent me a sheet, being a reprint of his notes contributed to the *Statesman*, in which he gave his opinion based on his Italian experiences, (1) that the agriculture of India depended upon good cattle, (2) that the cattle of India were ill-kept and therefore worse than elsewhere, (3) that they could be improved only by India *growing cattle crop instead of merely depending on common pastures*, and (4) that by the system of rotation cattle crop could be grown side by side with food grains without diminishing the returns of the latter.

I had difficulty in applying the Italian conditions to the Indian inasmuch as we have such small holdings even as little as two acres and sometimes even less. To my objection which I conveyed to him, Mr. Galletti sent me the following reply :

"Many thanks for yours of the 26th February, received today in my camp in my Agency hills. I will reply to your objection from experience.

"*Small holdings* : My father had 11 farms, the largest 48 hectares odd, the smallest 1.7 hectares, or say 120 acres and 4 acres. The 4 acre farm was rotated precisely in the same way as the 120 acre farm ; 1 acre wheat, 1 acre maize, 2 acres fodder in turn ; and this is the point I make in answer to you. Even small holdings can and must be rotated. Our small ryot kept only one pair of bullocks but fed them with the utmost care. He managed to live with his wife and two or three young children on his 4 acres of dry land. He lived in rude comfort because, as my father used to say, his little farm was a garden, every inch fertilised by his sweat, which is the best manure. He had his little kitchen-garden, he had his olive-trees, he had mulberry trees in the fields with vines creeping up them; he had fig

and cherry trees. His wife spun and wove his clothes in the winter and kept silk-worms in the summer. He had some bee-hives and in the off season would take his bandy and bullocks out on hire. He kept sheep and pigs and fowls.

“The 120 acre farm was run by a joint family of 4 brothers with their wives and children and elders; altogether between 40 and 50 persons. It was 30 times as large. But it did not use 30 pairs of bullocks instead of one. It had only 8 pairs of bullocks. It did not put 30 times as much manure and 30 times as much sweat into the land. It did not produce 30 times as much wheat or maize or fodder or hand-spun yarn or cloths. I know what the produce of each of these farms was for about 20 years. We keep accurate accounts because we share everything, down to the eggs and fruit and cloths, equally with our ryots (though out of our half share we pay the heavy taxes, repairs to house and farm buildings and half the cost price of cattle, impliments and chemical manures). On my father's death I had to sell and I worked out the nett average value of each farm to us and multiplied by 25 to get the selling price. I remember that I fixed the selling price of the 120 acre farm at 60,000 lire and of the 4 acre farm at 6,000. Therefore the small farm had been yielding us three times as much an acre as the 120 acre farm. These price figures imply nett incomes of 2,400 and 240 lire to the owner. The ryot's share is not subject to the heavy deductions for taxes and repairs and is actually rather more than twice as much. So the 4 acre ryot made some 600 lire out of his farm and then there were the profits on silk-worms, hire of bandy and spinning and weaving. Probably his income was 900 lire which is Rs. 600 or Rs.50 a month. The land is ordinary clay on a hillslope 1000 feet above the sea and only valuable because labour of man and beast has made it so.

“Let your small holder in India put his sweat and that

of really good cattle into the land ; let him keep silk-worms, go out on hire with his bandy, keep a kitchen-garden and fruit-trees, and spin and weave ; and keep half his land for fodder for his cattle ; and he will prosper and his cattle will thrive. If the holding is even smaller than 4 acres and in little pieces here and there, it is wrong for him to keep half-starved cattle at all. Let him work his land with the hoe instead of the plough, as the Japanese do.

“My whole point is that if he keeps cattle at all, he must keep them as he does his own children and see that they have their food daily and he cannot do this unless he keeps half his land at least, but better three fifths, to grow fodder, and when he next plants a cereal where the fodder grew, he will find it yields three times as much and he will not diminish human food by reducing the area he grows it on ; he will increase the amount of human food.

“Indian poverty does not stand in the way of rotation of crops. Rotated crops require no more expenditure of money than stable crops. In Java the Dutch forced paddy rotation on the people a century ago by the Sjangbok. The population of Java has increased from 2 million to 30 million during their rule and the yield of the rice and sugar fields has increased proportionately. The change was brought about not by capital expenditure but by an intelligent Government using force. In India there is no question of using the Sjangbok to drive in ideas and make people work. We wish to convince not to compel. Here my hope is that the directing class will undertake the work of persuading the people and that you, the spiritual director of the directing class, will be the first to put your hand to the plough. Your support will make all the difference. 10 crores of cattle are mutely appealing to you.”

The appeal of the crores of India's cattle lies not to me alone, but to every Indian who can think for himself, more especially perhaps to every Hindu who prides himself on being the special protector of the cow. I hope that the readers have

‘been perusing the carefully prepared notes by Sjt. V. G. Deasi on the slaughter of India’s cattle. They give a graphic description of the condition of the cattle in the cities of India. Mr. Galletti paints the condition of farm cattle and prescribes in detail the remedy for improving them. The question of improving the breed of cattle and preserving them is a question as well of first rate economics as of religion. How far Mr. Galletti’s remedy is applicable to Indian conditions, I do not know. Practical farmers alone can give an authoritative opinion. But one difficulty is obvious. Millions of farmers are too ignorant to adopt new and revolutionary methods. Assuming the truth of Mr. Galletti’s prescription, its application depends upon the agricultural education of the large mass of Indian humanity. But those who know anything of agriculture and who have a patch of land under cultivation should try Mr. Galletti’s remedy and publish results. For such, I give below the relevant extracts from the sheet sent by Mr. Galletti :

“We irrigate the meadow in Lambardy, as well as the paddy-field. We still keep there bullocks strong to the plough and cows that yield 1000 seers of milk a month. We sow fodder crops for them by the hand. We devote half our land by rotation to pasture for them.

“When paddy was first introduced and grown year after year in the same fields, the cattle had to be driven away to the hills in the summer, which is our season there for the growing of paddy. But sowing paddy year after year in the same fields has been given up long ago. ‘Rotation paddy-fields are far more productive than the stable paddy-fields,’ says an Italian text-book, ‘and their productive capacity is great in proportion to their freshness. . . .’

“If paddy is only grown one year in three or two years in five, you divide up your paddy land into three parts or five parts and each year are using two-thirds or three-fifths of land for other crops, mostly grass, trefoil lucerne which cattle eat or oats which are also only cattle food in Italy. The greater part of your paddy land will accordingly be pro-

ducing all the time food for your cattle and it is no wonder that the Lombard ploughing bullock is a sleek, well-fed animal four times the weight of the little starved abortions used in India, and the average Lombard cow yields, I am afraid to say how many times as much milk of better quality than the Indian. When I went over the paddy-farm of Cav Stabilini near Milan not long ago, it was his cows that he was most anxious to show me and he told me that he made much more by them than by his paddy. He sends his milk, his butter, his cream, his cheese into Milan. The paddy-farmer of Bengal has no milk or cream or butter or *ghee* to send into the great market of Calcutta, which would so willingly pay him high prices for pure products of the cow. Cav Stabilini's cows not only have beautiful meadows and lucerne and clover hay made for them and corn but palatial stables and all the latest appliances for cleaning and milking. Where the cow is a valuable possession, she is tended with care and love, and crops are grown for her and palaces are built for her. Here she is merely an object of veneration, she is left to stand and starve in the public standing and starving grounds which are miscalled grazing grounds in India. India should abolish these places of torture and breeding-grounds of disease and abortion, and every Indian should devote three-fifths or two-thirds of his land to growing grass and fodder for his cattle.

"I assure him he will not be a loser. Apart from the fact that the milk-crop, at any rate near large centres of population, is more valuable than the paddy-crop and better food, rotated and manured paddy will yield him two or three times as much as the unrotated and unmanured. I do not think the soil or climate of Lombardy are superior or even equal to those of the Deltas of the Ganges, the Godavari, the Kristna or the Cauvery for paddy-growing. The season in Lombardy when it is hot enough is so short that it is with difficulty they can scramble out one crop a year. But what are the figures for the yield? The official figures for the average yield in North Italy is 45 quintals a hectare= $4\frac{1}{2}$  tons, *i. e.* nearly two tons.

per acre. The official figures for most parts of India is well below 1,500 lbs. an acre. In my own district of Ganjam, where one million acres are cultivated and there is nothing to be seen but paddy, the yeild is about 1,200 lbs. If we reduce the average to 4,00,000 acres taken in rotation and manured properly and weeded properly as they do in Italy, and get a yield of 4,000 lbs. an acre instead 1,200, the 4,00,000 acres would yield one-third more paddy than the million acres do now, and we shall have in hand 6,00,000 acres on which to raise crops of grass and fodder for the cattle or wheat or maize and other crops for men.

“ If the Indian visitor goes to Revenna,—a place well worth visiting for itself,—let him also study the paddy growth at the mouth of the river there. It is a country of fine cattle and good pasturage and the chief crop he will see is lucerne. Paddy is grown not so much for its value as because it is the only suitable crop pending the silting up of the soil ; when the soil has risen sufficiently, wheat takes the place of paddy. The common rotation there is 2 years paddy, then 2 to 5 years lucerne, so that  $\frac{5}{7}$ ths of an estate may be under fodder and only  $\frac{2}{7}$ ths under paddy. Indian conditions are very nearly reproduced there; the fiat swampy country is not unlike Bengal: paddy is not cultivated with care or much manured and made to yield much; but even there though the population is thick and men must eat, more land is devoted to food for cattle than to food for men; and there too the cattle put all Indian cattle to shame.

“ The Indian is not cruel to his cattle, but very, very callous. He will not give up one inch of his land to them. He wants it all for himself. He will only stall-feed a very few and leaves the rest to multiply without limit and then to starve down to the limit that the public pastures can sustain. He takes no thought for what they will do in the hot weather when there is not even the scanty grass of the public pasture and the rocky jungle hills and never dreams of cutting grass and making a haystack. In India we have only the strawstack,

stuff fit for cattle to sleep on but not to eat. Let the Indian visitor look about him in Europe. He will find every farm-house encircled by as many hay-stacks as straw-stacks.

“The Italian peasant lives in a joint family with his brothers like the Indian and is much attached to his brother, and will greatly lament if his brother dies, but far more if his ox dies. Such is the high estimation of cattle in a country where the bullock is the main-stay of the house though the cow is no object of religious veneration. Let the Indian visitor to Italy learn to appreciate the following of the Italian royt towards the pious ox whom the mild Virgil loved and he will come back to India and found a Cattle Protection Society, no longer to save the Hindu sacred cow from the Muhammadan butcher, but to protect all cattle against the heartless neglect and unconscious cruelty of the East.”

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*20th May, 1925*

## WAR OR PEACE

BY M. K. GANDHI

It was not without purpose that I reproduced the main parts of Mr. Page's very able pamphlet on the World War. I hope that the reader followed them with the care and attention the chapters deserved. Mr. Page has proved conclusively that both the parties were equally to blame and that both resorted to barbarous and inhuman practices. We did not need Mr. Page's help to learn that no war of which history has any record took so many lives as this did. Moral loss was greater still. Poisonous forces destructive of the soul (lying and deception) were brought to perfection as much as the forces destructive of the body. The moral results have been as terrible as the physical. It is yet too early to measure the effect on mankind of the collapse of the sexual morality brought about by the War. Vice has usurped the throne of virtue. The brute in man has for the time being gained supremacy.



The after-effects are, perhaps, more terrible than the actual and immediate effects. There is no stability about the government of any single state of Europe. No class is satisfied with its own condition. Each wants to better it at the expense of the rest. War between the states has now become a war within each state.

India has to make her choice. She may try, if she wishes, the way of war and sink lower than she has. In the Hindu-Muslim quarrel, she seems to be taking her first lesson in the art of war. If India can possibly gain her freedom by war, her state will be no better and will be, probably, much worse than that of France or England. Past examples have become obsolete. Not even Japan's comparative progress can be any guide. For, 'the science' of war has made much greater 'progress' since the Russo-Japanese war. Its result can only be studied in the present condition of Europe. We can safely say that if India throws off the British yoke by the way of war, she must go through the state Mr. Page has graphically described.

But the way of peace is open to her. Her freedom is assured if she has patience. That way will be found to be the shortest even though it may appear to be the longest to our impatient nature. The way of peace insures internal growth and stability. We reject it because we fancy that it involves submission to the will of the ruler who has imposed himself upon us. But the moment we realise that the imposition is only so-called and that through our unwillingness to suffer loss of life or property, we are party to the imposition, all we need do is to change that negative attitude of passive endorsement. The suffering to be undergone by the change will be nothing compared to the physical suffering and the moral loss we must incur in trying the way of war. And the sufferings in following the way of peace must benefit both. They will be like the pleasurable travail of a new birth.

Let us not be misled by a hasty generalisation of the events of 1920-21. Great as the achievement of that brilliant period

was, it was nothing compared to what it might have been, had we been true and had faith. Violence was in the breasts of many of us whilst with our lips we paid homage to non-violence. And, though we were thus false to our creed, so far as we had accepted it we blamed it and lost faith instead of blaming and correcting ourselves. Chauri Chaura was a symptom of the disease that was poisoning us. Ours was claimed to be a peaceful, non-violent way. We could not sustain the claim in its fulness. The 'enemy's' taunts we need not mind. They saw violence even where there was not a trace of it. But we could not disregard the judgment of the 'still small voice within.' It knew the violence within.

The way of peace is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness. Indeed, lying is the mother of violence. A truthful man cannot long remain violent, He will perceive in the course of his search that he has no need to be violent and he will further discover that so long as there is the slightest trace of violence in him, he will fail to find the truth he is searching.

There is no half way between truth and non-violence on the one hand and untruth and violence on the other. We may never be strong enough to be entirely non-violent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep non-violence as our goal and make steady progress towards it. The attainment of freedom whether for a man, a nation or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence by each. Let those, therefore, who believe in non-violence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright in the midst of the present impenetrable gloom. The truth of a few will count, the untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a whiff of wind.

*20th May, 1926*

## A TRUE SACRIFICE

BY M. D.

I think it is Ruskin who tells the story of two great painters vying with each other in drawing a perfect straight line and a perfect circle, and declaring him who succeeded better as the greater painter. I wonder if at the present day we can find two very great men prepared to stake their greatness on their capacity to draw the thread from the spinning wheel. But I have not the slightest doubt that he who has mastered the art of spinning in all its details, and has achieved the capacity to pursue it in a religious spirit day in and day out, is not only a great spinner but a master craftsman, and a craftsman who lives not only for himself but for his fellows. And Mr. Zaverbhai Patel who performed the "spinning sacrifice" of 12 lacs of yards of yarn in a year seemed to me to have reached some such achievement. I was more interested in his feat than in that of, say, a swimmer of the English Channel in the briefest possible time. We know of numerous instances of ordinary men toiling in the sweat of their brow to great heights. We may point to them as successful examples of 'bread-labour,' a word coined by Tolstoy, to express a doctrine enunciated before him by Rousseau: 'He who eats in idleness what he himself has not worked for is a robber.' But the instances of those who toil in the sweat of their brow not for themselves only, but for others, that is, who live not only up to the modern doctrine of bread-labour, but the Gita doctrine of sacrifice,—'he who toils only for himself eats sin,'—are rarer. I interviewed Mr. Zaverbhai Patel, therefore, not out of the curiosity of a newspaper-man but from the desire of placing before the public a record which may instruct, ennoble and purify them. 'What led you to perform the 'sacrifice' in the particular way you did?' I began.

'Of course I was convinced of religiously spinning as the.

indispensable duty of social man. During the Congress Week in 1924 I tried to do as much spinning as I could do for a continuous length of time every day, and I succeeded in drawing 3,000 yards for a number of days. "Why not continue the experiment for a month?" said I to myself, and when I succeeded in doing so, I thought, "Why not for a year?"

'But to have done this for the whole year day in and day out, not for an hour, but hours, and over and above your daily duties of a school-teacher, can be no joke. You must have made a special effort to regulate your life to this end.'

'Indeed. But not, I am afraid, for an unbroken period of 365 days. There was a total break of about 44 days in the sacrifice,—the days on which I had to go out of my village. Of course I did manage to spin even in those days, but not to the extent I succeeded during the rest of the year. I spent eleven days at Bhavnagar attending a Montessori Conference, spinning during the interval only 4,500 yards on my *takli*. Five days I had to give to agricultural operations,—planting paddy, harvesting, etc.,—during which I could do very little spinning, and I was ill for three days when I could spin only three hours a day.'

'And you still say it has not been an unbroken *Yagna*. Nothing could be more unbroken. Even when you could not do the maximum you did do a certain minimum, not giving up the wheel even in illness. And then your average outturn comes to about 3,000 yards a day throughout the year, and over and above this you attended to the school routine. How did you pack all this toil for a period of one year, I wonder!'

'Yes I did all that and more. For I not only did the spinning, I picked all the necessary cotton and cleaned, ginned and carded it myself. But there is nothing extraordinary in that, I assure you. The school hours, practically all the year round, were six, three in the morning and three in the afternoon. There was no vacation, but we had 35 school-holidays, excluding Mondays and Fridays, corresponding to the Sundays and Saturdays of Government schools. Now I did more spinning on

these off days and holidays than on the week days and the morning and evening school was a convenience, for I could get three to four hours during the interval. Cotton picking I did on holidays. I would go out at 5 O'clock and work in the field until noon, picking on an average five lbs. an hour. Thus in Magha and Falguna I picked 280 lbs. just enough for my operations. There was of course less spinning on the days I picked and carded cotton. Thus in Magha whilst I have done 5,500 yards on some days, I had to content myself with two thousand and less for ten or twelve days. In Falguna carding took up a great deal of time and some days I did only 500 yards. That month the total was probably the lowest in the year, *i.e.*, 50,000 yards. I carded 13 lbs. in Magha,  $21\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. in Falguna, 58 lbs. in Chaitra, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. in Vaishakha,  $97\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. in all. My sister-in-law was good enough to roll all the slivers for me. When, however, I was free from these preliminary operations, I spun much more. Thus in Vaishakha I did 1,11,000; in Jyeshtha, Shravana and Pausha 1,05,000 yards, I shall present you with a little table:

Month	Yards	Count	Ginning	Carding
Pausha (1)	87,000			
Magha	84,500	21	135 lbs	13 lbs.
Falguna	50,500	$21\frac{1}{2}$	$151\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.	$21\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.
Chaitra	48,125	15		58 lbs.
Vaishakha	1,11,500	16		
Jyeshtha	1,05,500	16		
Ashadha	80,000	16		
Shravana	1,50,500	16		
Bhadrapada	81,000	16 (plus 4500 finer yarn)		
Ashvina	90,000	21 (plus 3500 finer yarn)		
Kartika	75,000	20		
Margashirsha	78,700	20		
Pausha	1,05,500	20		

(1) The month of experiment. Total 11,10,825 yards. 8,00,000 yards donation to the Congress; 3,10,125 kept for use at home; 12,000 yards utilised in making wheel-strings. "This is all very wonderful indeed. You tempt me to ask

one more question. I see no time left in your time-table for the satisfaction of the inner man!"

'No fear. I ate and slept enough. For three or four months in the year my wife was not at home. In those days I lived on bread and milk only, but that too thrice during the day. I ground my own flour too (5 lbs. an hour). During the rest of the year, I ate what every one of us eats, making a point of eating a halfmeal in the evening in the interest of health. This ensured sound dreamless sleep. I also took regular exercise,—5 or 6 exercises with the clubs, 100 *dands* and 200 *baithaks*,—dropping it when I worked in the field. In the monsoon I had fever for three days. So I kept fasts and could spin three hours a day.'

'Please then let me have in a nutshell your daily routine.'

'Getting up at 4 or 4-30 and getting to bed at 9. Spinning a thousand yards before going to school; carding in the afternoon before school-hours and when there was no carding doing 1,500 yards; after school hours 1,000 yards. That makes 6 hours at school, 7 hours for sleep,  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour for exercise, 8 hours for spinning (including other processes),  $2\frac{1}{4}$  hours for food, bath, etc. On holidays when there was no cleaning, ginning or carding to be done, I spun 12 hours and read something. I had 12 spindles straight and true ready for use and made my own wheel-strings. I spun 400 yards an hour on an average, sometimes reaching 500 to 550; spun at a stretch on Gandhiji's birthday for 20 hours and did 8,000 yards.'

'And you found time for reading too !'

'Not much beyond a few weeklies. There was an assistant teacher living with me who used to read to me the Gita and Principles of Pedagogy.'

'That's enough for me. I have no doubt you look back with pride and satisfaction on this achievement.'

'I do. I am thankful I succeeded in doing so. And the peace and powers of concentration and determination I developed were a unique gain. Mine had been a wild life before non-co-operation which brought me from darkness into light, from storm into peace. And this year's effort has been an education.'

What heaps of time we waste every day, and how best we could turn them to account if we but meant it! And in a life so filled with dutiful toil how can there be any room for the devil?’

‘I thank you.’

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*10th June, 1926*

### WHAT IS PRAYER?

BY M. K. GANDHI

A medical graduate asks :

“What is the best form of prayer? How much time should be spent at it? In my opinion to do justice is the best form of prayer and one who is sincere about doing justice to all, does not need to do any more praying. Some people spend a long time over *Sandhya* and 95 % of them do not understand the meaning of what they say. In my opinion prayer should be said in one’s mother-tongue. It alone can affect the soul best. I should say that a sincere prayer for one minute is enough. It should suffice to promise God not to sin.

Prayer means asking God for something in a reverent attitude. But the word is used also to denote any devotional act. Worship is a better term to use for what the correspondent has in mind. But definition apart, what is it that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Jews and others do every day during the time set apart for the adoration of the Maker? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing. It is in this case the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered. And often the association of words that have been handed down from ancient times has an effect which in their rendering into one’s mother-tongue they will lose altogether. Thus the *Gayatri* translated and recited in, say, Gujarati, will not have the same

effect as the original. The utterance of the word *Rama* will instantaneously affect millions of Hindus, when the word God, although they may understand the meaning, will leave them untouched. Words after all acquire a power by long usage and sacredness associated with their use. There is much therefore to be said for the retention of the old Sanskrit formulae for the most prevalent *mantras* or verses. That the meaning of them should be properly understood goes without saying.

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take. It depends upon individual temperament. These are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sober and humble us and enable us to realise that nothing happens without His will and that we are but 'clay in the hands of the Potter'. These are moments when one reviews one's immediate past, confesses one's weakness, asks for forgiveness and strength to be and do better. One minute may be enough for some, twentyfour hours may be too little for others. For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer or act of worship. For those others who act only to sin, to indulge themselves, and live for self, no time is too much. If they had patience and faith and the will to be pure, they would pray till they feel the definite purifying presence of God within them. For us ordinary mortals there must be a middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone as to believing purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately these have nowadays become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary, therefore, is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions.

For definite personal prayer in the sense of asking God for something, it should certainly be in one's own tongue. Nothing can be grander than to ask God to make us act justly towards everything that lives.



*17th June, 1926*

## CATTLE WEALTH

BY M. K. GANDHI

The reader who has been following Sjt. V.G. Desai's writings about the cow could not have failed to notice the fact that in no other country in the world save India are cattle a burden on the land or its people. It may be said that the slaughter of cattle is not only not repugnant to the vast majority of people in other lands but they deliberately kill out superfluous cattle. One may even go further and say that in such countries there is no such thing as superfluous cattle, because cattle are actually bred for slaughter. In this argument there is no doubt considerable force. But all the writings in these pages are devoted to showing that, although the vast majority of people in India will not slaughter cattle for food, by judicious management, her cattle need not become a burden on the land and that their slaughter can be made so dear as to enable only those people to slaughter who will do so for luxury or in the name of religion. The aim of *Young India* writings is to show that cattle at the present moment go to the slaughter-houses because of our criminal negligence and want of proper knowledge. It is further to show that the saving of an enormous number of cattle is more a problem of economics than religion ; or rather to show that there is no conflict between religion and economics. Indeed I have myself gone further and stated that a religion which is in conflict with fundamental economics is bad, and that in the reverse way economics that are in conflict with fundamental religion are also equally bad.

From the Western countries we can learn a great deal about cattle economics apart from their slaughter for food. If the nation, or say Hindus, would forego profits from cattle-keeping the self-denial would be enough to keep cattle during the natural term of their lives even after they cease to give us a return in the shape of milk or labour. The following passages from the

introduction to Henry and Morrisson's treatise on 'Feeds and Feeding' show how they regard cattle wealth in America :

"The animals of the farm should be regarded as living factories that are continuously converting their feed into products useful to man. A fact of great economic importance is, that a large part of the food they consume is of such character that humans cannot directly utilise it themselves.... Another product of greater aggregate money value than any one of these (*i.e.* food *e.g.* milk) is the work performed by horses and other draft animals.... In exclusive grain-farming the large amount of roughage, rest as straw and corn storer, which results as a by-product in the growing of cash crops, is not utilised in most instances. Such materials are merely in the way and are disposed of in the easiest manner often by burning, without regard for the loss of vegetable matter, so much needed by the soil. In a well-planned system of stock husbandry, all these materials are utilised for feed or bedding. Much forage, which cannot be consumed by humans, and would otherwise be wasted, is thus refined through the agency of animals, and converted into a form suitable for the nourishment of man, while a considerable part of the organic matter is returned to the fields in the resulting manure. Immense amounts of by-products result from the manufacture of the cereals and other seeds into flour, breakfast foods, oils etc. Although not suited for humans, some of these by-products are among our most valued feeds for stock. As the density of the population increases and the prices of foodstuffs advance, the feed supplied to our farm animals must, to an ever-increasing extent, consist of substances resulting secondarily from the making of human food, whether they be coarse roughages or milking by-products."

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*24th June, 1926***"MAHATMAJI'S ORDER"**

A teacher writes :

"There is a small group of boys of our school in..... who have been regularly sending 1,000 yards of self-spun yarn to the A. I. S. A. for some months, and they have been doing this little service merely on account of intense love for you. If any one asks them the reason for their spinning, they reply 'it is Mahatmaji's order. It has got to be obeyed.' I think such mentality on the part of little boys is to be encouraged in every way. Slave mentality is something quite different from the spirit of hero-worship or implicit obedience. These boys are now anxious to get some message from you in your own handwriting for their inspiration. I am sure their request will be complied with."

I do not know whether the mentality betrayed by this letter is hero-worship or blind worship. I can conceive occasions when implicit obedience without waiting for reasoning out causes is a necessity. It is essentially the quality of a soldier. And no nation can make substantial progress without the possession of that quality by a vast number of its people. But occasions for such obedience are and must be rare in any well-ordered society. The worst thing that can happen to boys in a school is to have to render blind "obedience to everything that the teacher says. On the contrary, if teachers are to stimulate the reasoning faculty of boys and girls under their care, they would continuously tax their reason and make them think for themselves. Faith only begins where reason stops. But there are very few actions in the world for which reasonable justification cannot be found. A teacher would not tolerate from his pupils, who were asked to account for drinking boiled and filtered water in a locality where the quality of well-water was suspected, an answer to the effect that such were the orders of a mahatma. And if it be wrong to admit such an answer, in the supposed case, it is surely wrong to approve of the justification

for spinning that the boys of the school in question have given for their spinning. When I am dislodged from my Mahatma-ship in that school, as I have certainly been dislodged in several homes to my knowledge, (for some of my correspondents have been gracious enough to inform me of their lost love), I am afraid the spinning wheel will be destroyed. Surely, a cause is often greater than the man. Certainly, the Spinning Wheel is greater than myself. I should be exceedingly sorry to find, when the hero-worship of me is destroyed, because of some fatuous mistakes that I may commit or because people are enraged against me for some cause or other, that the good cause of the spinning wheel had to suffer. It is therefore infinitely better that the pupils should reason out for themselves all the things that are capable of being so treated. The spinning wheel is essentially a thing for reasoning out. With it, in my opinion, is mixed up the well-being of the whole mass of Indian humanity. Pupils should therefore learn something about the deep poverty of the masses. They should have an ocular demonstration of some villages that are crumbling down to pieces. They should know the population of India. They should know the vast extent of this peninsula and they should know what it is that all the many millions can do to add to their scanty resources. They should learn to identify themselves with the poor and the downtrodden in the land. They should be taught to deny themselves, so far as possible, things that the poorest cannot have. Then they will understand the virtue of spinning. It will then survive any shock including disillusionment about myself. The cause of the spinning wheel is too great and too good to have to rest on mere hero-worship. It lends itself to scientific economic treatment.

I know that there is among us a great deal of blind hero-worship such as this correspondent has described and I hope that the teachers of National schools will take note of the warning I have uttered and prevent their pupils from lazily basing their actions upon statements, without testing, of men reputed to be great.

M. K. G.

*15th July, 1926*

## A GREAT HEART

BY M. K. GANDHI

Newspapers tell us that Miss Emily Hobhouse is no more. She was one of the noblest and bravest of women. She worked without ever thinking of any reward. Hers was service of humanity dedicated to God. She belonged to a noble English family. She loved her country and because she loved it, she could not tolerate any injustice done by it. She realised the atrocity of the Boer War. She thought that England was wholly in the wrong. She denounced the war in burning language at a time when England was mad on it. She went to South Africa and her whole soul rose against the barbarity of the concentration camps which Lord Kitchener thought were necessary if the war was to be won. It was then that William Stead led prayers for English reverses. Emily Hobhouse, frail as her body was, went again to South Africa at great personal risk to court insults and worse. She was imprisoned and sent back. She bore it all with the courage of a true heroine. She steeled the hearts of Boer women and told them never to lose hope. She told them that though England had gone mad, there were Englishmen and English women whose sympathies were with the Boers and that some day their voice would be heard. And so it was. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman swept the board at the General election of 1906 and made to the wronged Boers such reparation as was possible.

It was after the war and when Satyagraha was going on that I had the privilege of being known to Miss Hobhouse. The acquaintance ripened into a life-long friendship. She played no mean part at the settlement of 1914. She was General Botha's guest. Now General Botha had uniformly repelled my advances for an interview. Every time he referred me to the Home Minister. But Miss Hobhouse insisted on General Botha seeing me. And so she arranged for a meeting between the General, his wife

and herself and me at the General's residence in Capetown. Hers was a name to conjure with among the Boers. And she made my way smooth among them by throwing in the whole weight of her influence with the Indian cause. When I came to India and the Rowlatt Act agitation was going on she wrote saying that I must end my life in prison if not on the gallows and that she did not deplore it. She herself had full strength for such sacrifice. It was an article of faith with her that no cause prospered without the sacrifice of its votaries. Only last year she wrote to me saying that she was in active correspondence with her friend General Hertzog about the Indian cause in South Africa, asked me not to feel bitter against him and told me to tell her what I expected of General Hertzog. Let the women of India treasure the memory of this great English woman. She never married. Her life was pure as crystal. She gave herself to God's service. Physically she was a perfect wreck. She was paralytic. But in that weak and diseased body she had a soul that could defy the might of kings and emperors with their armies. She feared no man because she feared God only.

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*12th August, 1926*

## TRIUMPH OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

BY M. K. GANDHI

Pandit Malaviyaji's triumph is a national victory. Disrupted and demoralised though we are at the present moment, Punditji has shown that there is still courage left in us to defy the might of the mightiest empire. To have issued notice light-heartedly against one of the oldest and most respected and best known of India's public servants is an insolent exhibition of power. Let us assume for the moment that the Government had sufficient grounds for fearing Pundit Malaviyaji's presence in Calcutta at a time when they were trying to bring about

peace. It was still wrong to have dealt summarily with a man of Punditji's position in the Indian world. It would not have derogated from the Acting Governor's dignity if he had written a private note to Punditji or if he had invited him for a conference and placed before him the evidence in his possession and told him to absent himself in the interest of peace which Punditji claimed to desire as much as the Governor himself. In every one of his public speeches Punditji has put emphasis upon the desirability of peace. But the Government is too disdainful of public opinion even to think of any such courteous action. It expected Punditji and Dr. Moonje to take the order with due and humble submission. The Government evidently expected that Non-co-operation was dead, that civil disobedience died even before Non-co-operation and was decently buried at Bardoli and all that the Congress resolutions on civil disobedience were all idle threats. The Bengal Government has now discovered their mistake. Punditji's letter is a lesson in self-restraint combined with firmness. His following up the letter with action, his refusal to see the Magistrate and his triumphant entry into Calcutta, his advice to the people not to lose their heads, not to demonstrate, and, his quiet continuance of his programme as if nothing had happened, furnish an object lesson in perfect civil disobedience. It is to be hoped that the Government will understand that civil disobedience has come to stay and when occasion demands it, there will be more than one person in the country to adopt it.

Both Hindus and Mussalmans will commit a serious blunder if we considered that the serving of notice on Punditji and Dr. Moonje was an anti-Hindu and pro-Mahomedan act. With the Government all is grist that comes to its mill. If today it is a distinguished Hindu who has been served with a notice, it will be to-morrow an equally distinguished Mussalman to receive the same attention if the Government desires it for its own end. Nobody is deceived by the declaration that the Government sincerely wants peace between the communities. I venture to suggest that a real desire for peace between Hindus

and Mussalmans is wholly inconsistent with the desire to retain British rule in India by force of arms. When British officials begin the work of peace between these two branches of the Indian family, they will have begun to live in India on sufferance. After all, the discovery that India is governed by the 'divide and rule' policy was made in the first instance not by an Indian, but if I am not mistaken, by an Englishman. It was either the late Allen Octavius Hume or Geroqe Yule who taught us to believe that the empire was based upon a policy of divide-and-rule. Nor need we be surprised at or resent it. Imperial Rome did no otherwise. British did no otherwise with the Boers. By a system of favouritism it sought to divide the Boer ranks. The Government of India is based upon distrust. Distrust involves favouritism and favouritism must breed division. There are frank Englishmen enough who have owned this fact. No serious student of Indian history can help rejecting the recent declarations about peace on the part of the Viceroy or the Governors. I am prepared to believe that His Excellency the Viceroy is sincere in his declaration. It is not necessary for one to impute dishonesty to the high officials, if one is to ascribe the policy of 'divide and rule' to the Government. The division policy need not be always conscious and deliberate. Mussalmans against Hindus, Non-Brahmins against Brahmins, Sikhs against both, Gurkhas against all the three, this game of permutation and combination has gone on ever since the advent of British rule, and will continue so long as the Government considers its interests to be antagonistic to those of the people or its existence to be against the desire of the people. Hence it is that Swaraj is a vital necessity for national growth. Hence it is that Mrs. Besant has stated not without much force that Hindu-Muslim unity is almost an impossibility without Swaraj. And unfortunately we are having it demonstrated to us daily that Swaraj is an equal impossibility without Hindu-Muslim unity. I am however optimistic enough to believe that the unity will come inspite of ourselves because, I implicitly believe in Lokamanya's motto 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have



it.' Where man's effort may fail God's will succeed and His Government is not based upon 'divide and rule' policy.

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12th August, 1926

## JUSTICE FROM SIX THOUSAND MILES

By M. K. GANDHI

No conquest by force of arms is worth treasuring, if it is not followed by cultural conquest, if the conquered do not hug their chains and regard the conqueror as their benefactor. The different forts of India are no doubt a continuous reminder of the British might. But the silent conquest of the mind of educated India is a surer guarantee of British stability than the formidable forts *i.e.*, if the opinion expressed by the distinguished lawyers in *Indian Daily Mail* on the very modest proposal of Sir Hari Singh Gour for the establishment of a Supreme Court at Delhi is an index of that mind. For, these eminent lawyers regard the proposal as premature, in that judgments of the Privy Council sitting six thousand miles away from India would command, in their opinion, greater respect and ensure greater impartiality. This amazing opinion I venture to say has no foundation in fact. But distance lends enchantment to the scene. Members of the Privy Council are after all human beings. They have been found to betray political bias. Their decisions in cases involving questions of custom are often distortions of the reality, not because they are perverse, but because it is not possible for mortals to know everything. A less trained lawyer having a direct knowledge of a local custom is better able to appraise evidence on it than those who, no matter what their attainments are, know nothing of local conditions.

The distinguished lawyers moreover state that expenses will not be less because the final court of appeal is brought down to Delhi. It does not say much for the patriotism of these eminent gentlemen, if they mean that the fees should be on the

same scale in poor India as in rich England. A Scotch friend once told me that Englishmen were probably the most extravagant in the world in their tastes and requirements. He told me that hospitals in Scotland were far less expensively fitted than in England though they were in no way inferior in usefulness to those in England. Or does a legal argument increase in weight with an increase in the fees charged?

The third argument pressed into service in order to oppose the proposed change is that Indian judges will not command the same weight as the wigged ones in White Hall. If this was not an argument advanced by distinguished lawyers, it would be laughed out. Is respect for judgments commanded by their impartiality, or the location, or the birth, or the colour of the skin, of judges? And if it is the seat or the birth or the pigment that determines the weight to be attached to judges' decisions, is it not high time that the superstition was removed by removing the seat and appointing judges of Indian birth? Or does the argument presuppose partiality on the part of judges of Indian birth? One does sometimes hear of poor people under stress of ignorance desiring an English Collector in the place of an Indian. But greater fearlessness and sanity are surely to be expected of experienced lawyers.

But while in my humble opinion none of the three arguments advanced against the proposal has any force, the deciding reason for having our Supreme Court in India is that our self-respect demands it. Just as we cannot breathe with other lungs, be they ever so much more powerful, so may we not borrow or buy justice from England. We must take pride in being satisfied with the work our own judges may give us. Trials by jury often result, all over the world, in defeating justice. But people everywhere gladly submit to the drawback for the sake of the more important result of the cultivation of an independent spirit among people and the justifiable sentiment of being judged by one's own peers. But sentiment is at a discount in legal circles. And yet it is sentiment that rules the world. Economics and every other consideration is often flung to the winds when

sentiment predominates. Sentiment can be and must be regulated. It cannot be, ought never to be, eradicated. If it is not wrong to cherish patriotic feeling, it is surely not wrong to remove the final court of appeal to Delhi. Just as good government is no substitute for self-government, good justice, if foreign, is no substitute for home-made justice.

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*19th August, 1926*

### SUPPRESSED HUMANITY

BY M. K. GANDHI

The untouchable is not the only portion of suppressed humanity. The young widow in Hindu society is no less so. A correspondent from Bengal writes :

“There is no restriction among Muslims about widow re-marriage but there is provision for a man to marry up to four wives and as a matter of fact many Muslims have more than one wife. So none of the Muslim male population remains unmarried. It is not therefore true that where there is no restriction against widow re-marriage the number of females is much in excess of males? In other words is it not true that in the communities in which widow re-marriage is allowed, polygamy should also be allowed?

“If widow re-marriage is made common among Hindus will not young widows induce young men to marry them and make it difficult, rather impossible, to find out bridegrooms for unmarried girls?

“Will not unmarried girls then commit all the sins which are committed or are presumed to be committed by widows, if there be no provision to keep more than one wife by a Hindu?

“I refrain from reminding you of the love (*Prem*), the saintly *grahastha* life, the *Pativrata* Dharma and such other

things which should be taken into consideration in recommending widow re-marriage."

In his zeal to prevent widows from re-marrying the correspondent has ignored many things. Mussalmans have indeed the right to take more than one wife but the vast majority of them have only one wife. The correspondent does not seem to know that unfortunately there is no prohibition against polygamy in Hinduism. Hindus in highest circles have been known to marry more than one wife. Many princes marry an unlimited number. The correspondent further forgets the fact that it is only among the so-called higher classes that widow-re-marriage is prohibited. Among the vast majority belonging to the fourth division, widows freely remarry but no untoward consequences have taken place. Though free to take more wives than one, they are as a rule satisfied with one companion at a time.

The suggestion that young widows will take up all young men and leave none for unmarried girls betrays a woeful want of sense of proportion. The excessive anxiety for the chastity of young girls betrays an unhealthy mind. The limited number of widows remarrying can never leave a large number of young girls unmarried. And in any event, if ever such a problem arose it would be found to be due to the early marriages that take place to-day. The remedy in anticipation is to prevent early marriages.

Of the love, the sanctity of *grihastha* life, etc. where there is a widow of tender age, the less said the better.

But the correspondent has missed the whole of my point. I have never advocated widow re-marriage on a whole-sale scale. The statistics collected by Sir Ganga Ram and summarised in these pages deal with widows upto 15 years only. These poor, wretched beings know nothing of *Pativrata* dharma. They are strangers to love. The truer statement would be to say that these girls were never married at all. If marriage is, as it ought to be, a sacrament, an entrance into a new life, the girls to be married should be fully developed, should have some hand in the choice of companions for life, and should know the consequ-

ences of their acts. It is a crime against God and man to call the union of the children a married state and then to decree widow-hood for a girl whose so-called husband is dead.

I do believe that a real Hindu widow is a treasure. She is one of the gifts of Hinduism to humanity. Ramabai Ranade was such a gift. But the existence of girl widows is a blot upon Hinduism for which the existence of a Ramabai is no atonement.

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*2nd September, 1926*

### CRIME OF READING BIBLE

BY M. K. GANDHI

Several correspondents have written to me taking me to task for reading the New Testament to the students of the Gujarat National College. One of them asks: "Will you please say why you are reading the Bible to the students of the Gujarat National College? Is there nothing useful in our literature? Is the Gita less to you than the Bible? You are never tired of saying that you are a staunch *sanatani* Hindu. Have you not now been found out as a Christian in secret? You may say a man does not become a Christian by reading the Bible. But is not reading the Bible to the boys a way of converting them to Christianity? Can the boys remain uninfluenced by the Bible reading? Are they not likely to become Christians by reading the Bible? What is there specially in the Bible that is not to be found in our sacred books? I do hope you will give an adequate reply and give preference to the Vedas over the Bible."

I am afraid I cannot comply with the last request of my correspondent. I must give preference to that which the boys lawfully want over what I or others may desire. When they invited me to give them an hour per week, I gave them the choice between reading the Gita, Tulsidas' Ramayana, and answering questions. By a majority of votes, they decided to

have the New Testament and questions and answers. In my opinion, the boys were entitled to make that choice. They have every right to read the Bible or to have it read to them. I offered to read the Gita or the Ramayana as I am reading both at the Ashram to the inmates and as therefore the reading of either at the National College would have involved the least strain and the least preparation. But the boys of the College probably thought they could read the other books through others but they would have from me my interpretation of the New Testament as they knew that I had made a fair study of it.

I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty. We need not dread, upon our grown-up children, the influence of scriptures other than our own. We liberalise their outlook upon life by encouraging them to study freely all that is clean. Fear there would be when some one reads his own scriptures to young people with the intention secretly or openly of converting them. He must then be biased in favour of his own scriptures. For myself, I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Quran, and the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be a staunch *sanatani* Hindu. He is no *sanatani* Hindu who is narrow, bigoted, and considers evil to be good if it has the sanction of antiquity and is to be found supported in any Sanskrit book. I claim to be a staunch *sanatani* Hindu because, though I reject all that offends my moral sense, I find the Hindu scriptures to satisfy the needs of the soul. My respectful study of other religions had not abated my reverence for or my faith in the Hindu scriptures. They have indeed left their deep mark upon my understanding of the Hindu scriptures. They have broadened my view of life. They have enabled me to understand more clearly many an obscure passage in the Hindu scriptures.

The charge of being a Christian in secret is not new. It is both a libel and a compliment—a libel because there are men

who can believe me to be capable of being secretly anything, i. e. for fear of being that openly. There is nothing in the world that would keep me from professing Christianity or any other faith, the moment I felt the truth of and the need for it. Where there is fear there is no religion. The charge is a compliment in that it is a reluctant acknowledgment of my capacity for appreciating the beauties of Christianity. Let me own this. If I could call myself, say, a Christian, or a Mussalman, with my own interpretation of the Bible or the Quran, I should not hesitate to call myself either. For then Hindu, Christian and Mussalman would be synonymous terms. I do believe that in the other world there are neither Hindus, nor Christians nor Mussalmans. There all are judged not according to their labels or professions but according to their actions irrespective of their professions. During our earthly existence there will always be these labels. I therefore prefer to retain the label of my forefathers so long as it does not cramp my growth and does not debar me from assimilating all that is good anywhere else.

The hypersensitiveness that my correspondents have betrayed is but an indication of the intensity of the wave of intoleration that is sweeping through this unhappy land. Let those who can, remain unmoved by it.

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*23rd September, 1926*

## NON-RESISTANCE: TRUE AND FALSE

BY M. K. GANDHI

America is the home of inter-racial conflict on a vast scale. There are earnest men and women in that land of enterprises who are seeking to solve the difficult problem along the lines of non-resistance. One such American friend sends me a paper called the Inquiry which contains an interesting discussion on the doctrine of non-resistance. It consists of instances that might possibly be grouped under non-resistance. I select three samples :

"A Chinese student related his experiences at the State University from which he was about to graduate. His reception there had been anything but friendly for the most part, although a few men had gone out of their way to befriend him, one of them even inviting the Chinese to his home for a week-end. On the other hand, a fellow student who occupied a room next to his made himself particularly obnoxious, throwing shoes against his door and indulging in other pranks. The Chinese overheard this student express horror on finding that an American had taken him home to introduce him to his mother and sister, and immediately he made up his mind that he would teach this student to respect him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of his dear motherland.

"So he went out of his way to be friendly to his neighbour. Every day he gave him a smiling good morning, though at first he received no response. He ignored every insult, but tried to make himself pleasant and useful. When he knew his neighbour to be hard up he casually invited him to go to a movie with him. Gradually they talked together more often and found that they had several interests in common. After a while this student invited him to his home.

"'We have become warm friends', concluded the Chinese. 'I have since spent many holidays and week-ends at his home; and on leaving the university I shall know that one of my fellow students at least will regretfully miss me.'"

"The secretary of a railroad Young Men's Christian Association brought one evening into the building twelve Danes, working on the railroad, who had no place to sleep. The English-speaking men, under the sway of racial antipathy, began to object and protested against the foreigners being brought in. Among these newcomers, however, was a skilled musician, who, while the Americans were presenting their objections to the secretary, began to play upon



the accordian. He discoursed sweet music, which soon had its effect. The ire on the faces of the native-born soon began to vanish; the censure died on their lips; their hearts were softened; and that night they sat up late listening to the foreigner playing. "Peter Roberts, *The New Immigration*. The Macmillan Co., 1922, p. 300."

"There is a colony of Japanese in X, California. Several years ago some real estate agents sought to sell a considerable amount of land to other Japanese and the white people were aroused at the thought of a great influx of these people. Meetings were held and a big sign was put up on the main boulevard which read: "No Japanese wanted here."

"The old resident Japanese of X, who had lived on good terms with the white people, being members of their Farmers' Association, went to the white people and after consultation finally agreed with them that a further increase in the Japanese population would not be a good thing. The sign was changed to read: "No more Japanese wanted here."

"The person who tells this story contends that this action advanced the solidarity of the community and improved relations between the whites and the Japanese in that place, as witness the following:

"The Japanese of X, learning that the American church was in financial difficulties, offered to give a definite amount yearly for its support, in addition to carrying on their own Japanese church work."

Now the first easily comes under true non-resistance. The second is more an instance of presence of mind than non-resistance. Third, from the facts as stated, is an instance, if not of cowardice, as contended by some of the debaters, certainly of selfishness. The resident Japanese population in order to retain their earthly possessions agreed to the prohibition of further Japanese immigration. It may have been sound policy. It may have been the only policy advisable. But it was not non-resistance.

Non-resistance is restraint voluntarily undertaken for the good of society. It is therefore an intensely active purifying inward force. It is often antagonistic to the material good of the non-resister. It may even mean his utter material ruin. It is rooted in internal strength never weakness. It must be consciously exercised. It therefore presupposes ability to offer physical resistance. In the last instance, therefore, the Japanese would have non-resisted, if they had left all their possessions rather than surrendered the rights of prospective immigrants. They might also have suffered death lynching without even mental retaliation and thus melted the hearts of their persecutors. It was no victory of truth that without any inconvenience to themselves, they were able to retain their property. In terms of non-resistance, their contribution to the American Church in its difficulty was a bribe, by no means a token of good-will or a free gift.

The acquisition of the spirit of non-resistance is a matter of long training in self-denial and appreciation of the hidden forces within ourselves. It changes one's outlook upon life. It puts different values upon things and upsets previous calculations. And when once it is set in motion its effect, if it is intensive enough, can overtake the whole universe. It is the greatest force because, it is the highest expression of the soul. All need not possess the same measure of conscious non-resistance for its full operation. It is enough for one person only to possess it, even as one general is enough to regulate and dispose of the energy of millions of soldiers who enlist under his banner even though they know not the why and wherefor of his dispositions. The monkeys of one Rama were enough to confound the innumerable host armed from head to foot of the ten-headed Ravana.

*23rd September, 1926*

## NO FAITH IN PRAYER

BY M. K. GANDHI

Here is a letter written by a student to the Principal of a national institution asking to be excused from attending its prayer meetings :

"I beg to state that I have no belief in prayer, as I do not believe in anything known as God to which I should pray. I never feel any necessity of supposing a god for myself. What do I lose if I do not care for Him and calmly and sincerely work my own schemes?

"So far as congregational prayer is concerned, it is of no use. Can such a huge mass of men enter into any mental concentration upon a thing, however trifling it may be? Are the little and ignorant children expected to fix their fickle attention on the subtlest ideas of our great scriptures, God and soul and equality of all men and many other high-sounding phrases? This great performance is required to be done at a particular time at the command of a particular man. Can love for the so-called Lord take its root in the hearts of boys by any such mechanical function? Nothing can be more repugnant to reason than to expect the same behaviour from men of every temperament. Therefore prayer should not be a compulsion. Let those pray who have a taste for it and those avoid who dislike it. Anything done without conviction is an immoral and degrading action."

Let us first examine the worth of the last idea. Is it an immoral and degrading act to submit to discipline before one begins to have conviction about its necessity? Is it immoral and degrading to study subjects according to the school syllabus if one has no conviction about its utility? May a boy be excused from studying his vernacular, if he has persuaded himself that it is useless? Is it not truer to say that a school boy has no conviction about the things he has to learn or the discipline

he has to go through? His choice is exhausted if he had it, when he elected to belong to an institution. His joining one means that he will willingly submit to its rules and regulations. It is open to him to leave it but he may not choose what or how he will learn.

It is for teachers to make attractive and intelligible what to the pupils may at first appear repulsive or uninteresting.

It is easy enough to say, 'I do not believe in God.' For God permits all things to be said of Him with impunity. He looks at our acts. And any breach of His Law carries with it, not its vindictive, but its purifying, compelling, punishment. God's existence cannot be, does not need to be proved. God is. If He is not felt, so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease which we shall some day throw off *volens volens*.

But a boy may not argue. He must out of a sense of discipline attend prayer meetings if the institution to which he belongs requires such attendance. He may respectfully put his doubts before his teachers. He need not believe what does not appeal to him. But if he has respect for his teachers, he will *do* without believing, what he is asked to do, not out of fear, not out of churlishness, but with the knowledge that it is right for him so to do and with the hope that what is dark to him to-day will some day be made clear to him.

Prayer is not an asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is a daily admission of one's weakness. The tallest among us has a perpetual reminder of his nothingness before death, disease, old age, accidents etc. We are living in the midst of death. What is the value of 'working for our own schemes' when they might be reduced to naught in the twinkling of an eye, or when we may be equally swiftly and unawares be taken away from them? But we may feel strong as a rock, if we could truthfully say 'we work for God and His schemes. Then' all is as clear as day-light. Then nothing perishes. All perishing is then only what seems. Death and destruction have *then*, but *only then* no reality about them. For death or destruction is

then but a change. An artist destroys his picture for creating a better one. A watch maker throws away a bad spring to put in a new and useful one.

A congregational prayer is a mighty thing. What we do not often do alone, we do together. Boys do not need conviction. If they merely attend in obedience to the call to prayer without inward resistance, they feel the exaltation. But many do not. They are even mischievous. All the same the unconscious effect cannot be resisted. Are there not boys who at the commencement of their career were scoffers but who subsequently became mighty believers in the efficacy of congregational prayer? It is a common experience for men who have no robust faith to seek the comfort of congregational prayer. All who flock to churches, temples, or mosques are not scoffers or humbugs. They are honest men and women. For them congregational prayer is like a daily bath, a necessity, of their existence. These places of worship are not a mere idle superstition to be swept away at the opportunity. They have survived all attacks up to now and are likely to persist to the end of time.

### RELIGION OF VOLUNTEERS

After showing that in this land of many religions, a volunteer is hard put to it to find a common denominator of conduct, a correspondent thus eloquently describes the religion of a volunteer :

“The Religion of the Volunteer does not stand on a par with the denominational religions, just as unquestionably, Truth does not stand on a par with them. All the religions inculcate Truth, have as their essence Truth ; but Truth is not of a piece with those religions. It is not one among those the religions, but it is *the* Religion over and above all minor religions, their acknowledged Lord and Superior. If only the Truth at the bottom of the several religions of the world be fully recognised and assimilated, at that very moment the conflict between the various religions

will disappear and the bloody scenes that are now and then enacted in the name of religion, will have their final quietus. It is this Truth, the Religion of religions, which inevitably commands instantaneous, universal assent and allegiance of mankind when it is understood, though surely they would not for a moment brook their conversion to any other faith. But this sort of conversion, this letting in a flood of light and dispelling of darkness, this clearing up of vision, everyone hails and longs for from the depth of his heart. A Hindu would not like actual conversion to Islam, but he would, most surely, be always ready to greedily imbibe the Truth that may be embedded in it. If ever the dream of bringing the whole world under one religion is to be realised it can only be by establishing the sovereignty of Truth as the world-religion. The religion of the Volunteer is none other than Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, and it is not too much to expect mankind voluntarily to submit to its sway. This being made clear, we must next inquire into the profound effects which Truth will have on its devotee. It will be as if a chronic disease of a very long standing, inherited or acquired, has been healed; as if the blind man has been given back his sight; as if the cripple has been enabled to walk; and the impotent again blessed with his manhood. Truth will not only illumine the darkness of the soul of its devotee, but will light up his body also. The soul has been called the 'eye of the body,' and if it is filled with Truth or Light, it shall see clearly and will itself become light and guide the body properly. Jesus says :

"The light of the body is the eye therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."

Stripped of the eloquence, this religion of Truth again resolves itself into its component parts Hinduism, Islam, Christianity etc. For Truth will appear to most sincere and

Duragraha or violence. The triumph of Satyagraha consists in meeting death in the insistence on truth. A Satyagrahi is always unattached to the attainment of the object of Satyagraha; one seeking to recover money cannot be so unattached. I am therefore clear that fasting for the sake of personal gain is nothing short of intimidation and the result of ignorance.

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*7th October, 1926*

### VEGETARIANISM

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent is born in a meat-eating family. He has successfully resisted the pressure from his parents to return to the flesh-pot. 'But,' he says, 'in a book I have before me, I read the opinion of Swami Vivekananda on the subject and feel a good deal shaken in my belief. The Swami holds that for Indians in their present state flesh-diet is a necessity and he advises his friends to eat flesh freely. He even goes so far as to say 'if you incur any sin thereby throw it upon me; I will bear it.' I am now in a fix whether to eat flesh or not.'

This blind worship of authority is a sign of weakness of mind. If the correspondent has such a deep-seated conviction that flesh-eating is not right, why should he be moved by the opinion to the contrary of the whole world? One needs to be slow to form convictions, but once formed they must be defended against the heaviest odds.

As for the opinion of the great Swami, I have not seen the actual writing but I fear the correspondent has correctly quoted him. My opinion is well known. I do not regard flesh-food as necessary for us at any stage and under any clime in which it is possible for human beings ordinarily to live. I hold flesh-food to be unsuited to our species. We err in copying the lower animal world if we are superior to it. Experience teaches that animal food is unsuited to those who would curb their passions.

But it is wrong to over-estimate the importance of food in

the formation of character or in subjugating the flesh. Diet is a powerful factor not to be neglected. But to sum up all religion in terms of diet, as is often done in India, is as wrong as it is to disregard all restraint in regard to diet and to give full reins to one's appetite. Vegetarianism is one of the priceless gifts of Hinduisim. It may not be lightly given up. It is necessary therefore to correct the error that vegetarianism has made us weak in mind or body or passive or inert in action. The greatest Hindu reformers have been the activist in their generation and they have invariably been vegetarians. Who could show greater activity than say Shankara or Dayanand in their times?

But my correspondent must not accept me as his authority. The choice of one's diet is not a thing to be based on faith. It is a matter for every one to reason out for himself. There has grown up especially in the West an amount of literature on vegetarianism which any seeker after truth may study with profit. Many eminent medical men have contributed to this literature. Here, in India, we have not needed any encouragement for vegetarianism. For it has been hitherto accepted as the most desirable and the most respectable thing. Those however who like the correspondent feel shaken, may study the growing movement towards vegetarianism in the West.

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*7th October, 1926*

### THE SAME OLD ARGUMENT

BY M. K. GANDHI

After reciting the evils from which we are suffering and after dealing with the improvements he would make in agriculture, a correspondent writes :

"I think all these cannot be effected if we can stand back and say modern civilization is a disease. We have to face the disease boldly, and find out a remedy for eradicating the evils accruing therefrom. We have come to a stage of development when we cannot get out of this modern or satanic civilisation. In this century of easy communication



no country can live in isolation from another. Western influences are shaking the very fundamentals of our society in economic, social, religious and political matters. In this struggle I think all the silly, superstitious and secondary elements have to meet their destruction making way for the solid and essential things to remain. . . . We cannot any longer be content with our bullock carts or old earthen lamps. We cannot escape the steamship, railways, motor cars, printing presses, the ideas of democracy, of love and world brotherhood. Nobody thought that Japan would become such a powerful nation in the East. If she had shirked to take up modern methods of production, she would have been exactly where for instance China is at present asking for sympathy of other nations. Our aim must be to see to the healthy growth of India. This cannot be done by magic. We must have a larger income. The national income is pitifully low. English economists complain that a decent cultured life is not possible with a less than *per capita* income of £50; then what about India? Unless we start industries able to withstand foreign competition, is it possible to increase the national dividend? We must have a favourable balance of trade for India and then and then only can the Indian peasant be made to think of sanitation, education, decency etc. . . . India is living yet for she has hitherto adapted herself to changing conditions. This cannot be done without the introduction of machinery and large scale production."

This is the old argument restated. The correspondent forgets that to make India like England and America is to find some other races and places of the earth for exploitation. So far it appears that the Western nations have divided all the known races outside Europe for exploitation and that there are no new worlds to discover. Among the exploited, India is the greatest victim. Japan is taking the share of the spoils no doubt. But if India and China refuse to be exploited what will happen to the exploiters? And if the Western nations plus Japan are

likely to come to grief, in the event of India and China refusing to be exploited, what can be the fate of India trying to ape the West? Indeed the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation. If they who are suffering from the disease are unable to find a remedy to correct the evils, how shall we, mere novices, be able to avoid them? The fact is that this industrial civilisation is a disease because it is *all* evil. Let us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships or telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. We must not suffer exploitation for the sake of steamships and telegraphs. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is therefore to destroy industrialism at any cost.

The correspondent has suggested the remedy without knowing it himself. For he admits that India has lived till now when other nations have perished because 'she has adapted herself to changing conditions.' Adaptability is not imitation. It means power of resistance and assimilation. India has withstood the onslaughts of other civilisations because she has stood firm on her own ground. Not that she has not made changes. But the changes she has made have promoted her growth. To change to industrialism is to court disaster. The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no change however revolutionary can do us any good. And if we love our neighbours, the paupers of India, for their sakes, we shall use what they make for us; for their sakes, we who should know, shall not engage in an immoral traffic with the West in the shape of buying the foreign fineries and taking them to the villages.

If we would but think seriously and persistently, we shall discover that before we make any other changes, the one great change to make is to discard foreign cloth and reinstate the ancient cottage industry of handspinning. We must thus restore our ancient and health-giving industry if we would resist industrialism.

I do not fight shy of capital. I fight capitalism. The West teaches one to avoid concentration of capital, to avoid a racial war in another and deadlier form. Capital and labour need not be antagonistic to each other. I cannot picture to myself a time when no man shall be richer than another. But I do picture to myself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich. Even in a most perfect world, we shall fail to avoid inequalities, but we can and must avoid strife and bitterness. There are numerous examples extant of the rich and the poor living in perfect friendliness. We have but to multiply such instances.

India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which she shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not therefore lazily and helplessly say, 'I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world.

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*14th October, 1926*

### TYRANNY OF WORDS

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent thus writes on my article 'No Faith in Prayer' published in *Young India* dated September 23rd :

"In your article bearing the above caption you hardly do justice to the 'boy' or to your own position as a great thinker. It is true that the expressions used by the writer

in his letter are not all happy but of his clarity of thought there is no doubt. It is also *very* evident that he is not a boy as the word is understood. I should be much surprised to find him under twenty. Even if he is young he seems to show sufficient intellectual development not to be treated in the manner of 'A boy may not argue'. The writer of the letter is a rationalist while you are a believer, two age-old types, with age-old conflict. The attitude of the one is, 'Let me be convinced and I shall believe', that of the other is, 'Believe and conviction shall come.' The first appeals to reason, the second appeals to authority. You seem to think that agnosticism is but a passing phase among all young people and that faith comes to them sooner or later. There is the well-known case of Swami Vivekananda to support your view. You therefore proceed to prescribe a compulsory dose of prayer to the 'boy' for his own good. Your reasons are twofold. *Firstly*, prayer for its own sake, as a recognition of one's own littleness, and mightiness and goodness of the supposed higher being; *Secondly* for its utility, for the solace it brings to those who want to be solaced. I shall dispose of the second argument first. Here it is recommended as a sort of staff to the weak. Such are the trials of life, and such is their power to shatter the reason of men that great many people may need prayer and faith sometime. They have a right to it and they are welcome to it. But there have been and there are always some true rationalists—few no doubt—who have never felt the necessity of either. There is also the class of people who while they are not aggressive doubters are indifferent to religion.

"As all people do not ultimately require the help of prayer and as those who feel its necessity are *free* to take to it and *do* take to it, when required, compulsion in prayer from the point of utility cannot be upheld. Compulsory physical exercise and education may be necessary for physical and mental development of a person, not so the belief

in God and prayer for the moral side. Some of the world's greatest agnostics have been the most moral men. To these I suppose you would recommend prayer for its own sake, as an expression of humility, in fact your first argument. Too much has been made of this humility. So vast is knowledge that even the greatest 'scientists have felt humble sometimes, but their general trait has been that of *masterful* inquiry, their faith in their own powers has been as great as their conquests of nature. Had it not been so we should still be scratching earth with bare fingers for roots, nay, we should have been wiped out of the surface of the earth.

"During the Ice Age when human beings were dying of cold and when fire was first discovered, your prototype in that age must have taunted the discoverer with 'What is the use of your schemes, of what avail they are against the power and wrath of God?' The humble have been promised the Kingdom of God hereafter. We do not know whether they will get it, but here on this earth their portion is serfdom. To revert to the main point, your assertion about 'accept the belief and the faith shall come' is too true, terribly true. Much of the religious fanaticism of this world can be traced directly to this kind of teaching. Provided you catch them young enough, and keep at them repeatedly and long enough, you can make a good majority of human beings believe in *anything*. That is how your 'orthodox Hindu or fanatical Mahomedan is manufactured. There are of course always a small few in either community who will outgrow these beliefs that have been forced upon them. Do you know that if the Hindus and the Mahomedans stopped studying their scriptures until they reached maturity, they would not be such fanatical believers in their dogmas and would cease to quarrel for their sake? Secular education is the remedy for the Hindu-Muslim riots, but you will not be able to appreciate the solution, for you are not made that way.

“Great as our debt is to you for setting an unprecedented example in courage, action and sacrifice in this country, where people have been always *much* afraid, when the final judgment is passed on your work it will be said that your influence gave a great setback to intellectual progress in this country.”

I do not know the meaning of boy ‘as the word is ordinarily understood’, if a 20 year old lad is not a boy. Indeed I would call all school-going persons boys and girls irrespective of their ages. But whether the doubting student may be called a boy or a man, my arguments must stand. A student is like a soldier (and a soldier may be 40 years old) who may not argue about matters of discipline when he has put himself and chooses to remain under it. A soldier may not remain a unit in his regiment and have the option of doing or not doing things he is asked to do. Similarly a student, no matter how wise or old he is, surrenders when he joins a school or a college the right of rejecting its discipline. Here there is no underrating or despising the intelligence of the student. It is an aid to his intelligence for him to come voluntarily under discipline. But my correspondent willingly bears the heavy yoke of the tyranny of words. He scents ‘compulsion’ in every act that displeases the doer. But there is compulsion and compulsion. We call self-imposed compulsion self-restraint. We hug it and grow under it. But compulsion to be shunned even at the cost of life is restraint superimposed upon us against our wills and often with the object of humiliating us and robbing us of our dignity as men and boys if you will. Social restraints generally are healthy and we reject them to our own undoing. Submission to crawling orders is unmanly and cowardly. Worse still is submission to the multitude of passions that crowd round us every moment of our lives ready to hold us their slaves.

But the correspondent has yet another word that holds him in its chains. It is the mighty word ‘rationalism’. Well, I had a full dose of it. Experience has humbled me enough to let me realise the specific limitations of reason. Just as matter

misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy. If we would but render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's all would be well.

Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone believing it to be God.

Who has reasoned out the use of prayer? Its use is felt after practice. Such is the world's testimony. Cardinal Newman never surrendered his reason, but he yielded a better place to prayer when he humbly sang 'one step enough for me.' Shankara was a prince among reasoners. There is hardly anything in the world's literature to surpass Shankara's rationalism. But he yielded the first place to prayer and faith.

The correspondent has made a hasty generalisation from the fleeting and disturbing events that are happening before us. But everything on this earth lends itself to abuse. It seems to be a law governing everything pertaining to man. No doubt religion has to answer for some of the most terrible crimes in history. But that is the fault not of religion but of the ungovernable brute in man. He has not yet shed the effects of his brute ancestry.

I do not know a single rationalist who has never done anything in simple faith and has based every one of his acts on reason. But we all know millions of human beings living their more or less orderly lives because of their childlike faith in the Maker of us all. That very faith is a prayer. The 'boy' on whose letter I based my article belongs to that vast mass of humanity and the article was written to steady him and his fellow searchers, not to disturb the happiness of rationalists like the correspondent.

But he quarrels even with the bent that is given to the youth of the world by their elders and teachers. But that it seems, is an inseparable handicap (if it be one) of impressionable age. Purely secular education is also an attempt to mould the young mind after a fashion. The correspondent is good

enough to grant that the body and the mind may be trained and directed. Of the soul which makes the body and the mind possible, he has no care, or perhaps he is in doubt as to its existence. But his disbelief cannot avail him. He cannot escape the consequence of his reasoning. For, why may not a believer argue on the correspondent's own ground and say he must influence the soul of boys and girls even as the others influence the body and the intelligence? The evils of religious instruction will vanish with the evolution of the true religious spirit. To give up religious instruction is like letting a field lie fallow and grow weeds for want of the tiller's knowledge of the proper use of the field.

The correspondent's execution into the great discoveries of the ancients is really irrelevant to the subject under discussion. No one questions, I do not, the utility or the brilliance of those discoveries. They were generally a proper field for the use and exercise of reason. But they, the ancients, did not delete from their lives the predominant function of faith and prayer. Works without faith and prayer are like an artificial flower that has no fragrance. I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason itself.

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*21st October, 1926*

## TOUGH QUESTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

A fair friend who has some faith in my wisdom and sincerity asks some knotty questions which I would fain avoid for fear of raising an indignant controversy on the part of some husbands jealous of their rights. But jealous husbands would spare me, for they know that I happen to be one myself having led a fairly happy married life for the past forty years in spite of occasional jars.



The first question is apposite and timely. (The original is in Marathi. I have given a free rendering.)

Can a man or women attain self-realisation by mere recitation of *Ramanama* and without taking part in national service? I ask this question because some of my sisters say that they do not need to do anything beyond attending to family requirements and occasionally showing kindness to the poor.

This question has puzzled not only women but many men and has taxed me to the utmost. I know that there is a school of philosophy which teaches complete inaction and futility of all effort. I have not been able to appreciate that teaching, unless in order to secure verbal agreement I were to put my own interpretation on it. In my humble opinion effort *is* necessary for one's own growth. It has to be irrespective of results. *Ramanama* or some equivalent is necessary not for the sake of repetition but for the sake of purification, as an aid to effort, for direct guidance from above. It is therefore never a substitute for effort. It is meant for intensifying and guiding it in proper channel. If all effort is vain, why family cares or an occasional help to the poor? In this very effort is contained the germ of national service. And national service, to me, means service of humanity, even as disinterested service of the family means the same thing. Distinterested service of the family necessarily leads one to national service. *Ramanama* gives one detachment and ballast and never throws one off one's balance at critical moments. Self-realisation I hold to be impossible without service of and identification with the poorest

The second question is :

In Hinduism devotion of wife to her husband and her complete merger in him is the highest aim, never mind whether the husband is a fiend or an embodiment of love. If this be the correct conduct for a wife, may she in the teeth of opposition by her husband undertake national service? Or must she only go as far as the husband will permit her to go?

My ideal of a wife is Sita and of a husband Rama. But Sita was no slave of Rama. Or each was slave of the other. Rama is ever considerate to Sita. Where there is true love, the question asked does not occur. Where there is no true love, the bond has never existed. But the Hindu household of today is a conundrum. Husbands and wives when they are married know nothing of one another. Religious sanction fortified by custom and the even flow of the lives of the married people keep the peace in the vast majority of Hindus households. But when either wife or husband holds views out of the ordinary, there is danger of jars. In the case of the husband he has no scruples. He does not consider himself under any obligation to consult his partner's wishes. He regards his wife as his property. And the poor wife who believes in the husband's claim often suppresses herself. I think there is a way out. Miraubai has showed the way. The wife has a perfect right to take her own course and meekly brave the consequences when she knows herself to be in the right and when her resistance is for a nobler purpose.

The third question is :

If a husband is say, a meat-eater and the wife considers meat-eating an evil, may she follow her own bent? May she even try by all loving ways to wean her husband from meat-eating or the like? Or is she bound to cook meat for her husband or worse still, is she bound to eat it, if the husband requires her? If you say that the wife may take her own course, how can a joint household be run when the one compels and the other rebels?

This question is partly answered in the answer to the second. A wife is not bound to be an accomplice in her husband's crimes. And when she holds anything to be wrong she must dare to do the right. But seeing that the wife's function is to manage the household and thus to cook, as the husband's is to earn for the family, she is bound to cook meat for the family if both have been meat-eaters before. If on the other hand, in a vegetarian family, the husband becomes a

meat-eater and seeks to compel the wife to cook for him, the wife is in no way bound to cook what offends her sense of right. The peace of the household is a most desirable thing. But it cannot be an end in itself. For me, the married state is as much a state of discipline as any other. Life is duty, a probation. Married life is intended to promote mutual good both here and hereafter. It is meant also to serve humanity. When one partner breaks the law of discipline, the right accrues to the other of breaking the bond. The breach here is moral and not physical. It precludes divorce. The wife or the husband separates but to serve the end of which they had united. Hinduism regards each as absolute equal of the other. No doubt a different practice has grown up, no one knows since when. But so have many other evils crept into it. This however I do not know that Hinduism leaves the individual absolutely free to do what he or she likes for the sake of self-realisations for which and which alone he or she is born.

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*4th November, 1926*

### LITERALISM

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent writes thus passionately :

“ I am afraid, there is a little fly in the ointment of your splendid defence (in *Young India* of September 23) of practice of Divine prayer, especially congregational prayer. At the end of the article, referring to churches, temples and mosques you say, “ These places of worship are not a mere idle superstition to be swept away at the first opportunity. They have survived all attacks up to now and are likely to persist to the end of time.”

“ On reading this I asked myself : attacks by whom ? Surely those attacks were not made by atheists or scoffers or humbugs, to anything like the extent to which the opposing sects of God-believers are known to have attacked

the places of worship of one another. In fact, most, if not all, of the attacks you speak of were perpetrated by 'godly' zealots, *in the name and for the glory of each one's own God*. It would be insulting your knowledge of world history to cite instances.

"Secondly I asked myself: Is it true—is it strictly correct to say, that these places of worship have survived all attacks? Again the answer is: Surely not. Witness the site at Kashi (or Benares) where had stood the temple of Vishvanath for long centuries, since even before Lord Buddha's time—but where now stands dominating the 'Holy City' a mosque built out of the ruins of the desecrated old temple by orders of no less a man than the 'Living Saint' (*Zindra Pir*), the 'Ascetic King' (*Sultan Auliya*), the 'Puritan Emperor'—Aurangazeb. Again, it is not the 'unbelieving' British, but the terrible believer, Ibn Saud, and his Wahabi hosts, that are responsible for the recent demolition and desecration of many places of worship in the Hedjaz (Muslim's 'Holy Land'), over which Mussalman Indians are just now so loudly lamenting, and which the Nizam of Hyderabad—alone of all Muslim rulers in the world—has vainly tried to restore with his money.'

"Do these facts mean nothing to you Mahatmaji?"

These facts do mean a great deal to me. They show undoubtedly man's barbarity. But they chasten me. They warn me against becoming intolerant. And they make me tolerant even towards the intolerant. They show man's utter insignificance and thus drive him to pray, if he will not be led to it. For does not history record instances of humbled pride bending the knee before the Almighty, washing His feet with tears of blood and asking to be reduced to dust under His heels? Verily 'the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.'

The writer who is one of the most regular and painstaking readers of *Young India* should know by this time that places of worship to me are not merely brick and mortar. They are but a shadow of the reality. Against every church and every mosque

and every temple destroyed, hundreds have risen in their places. It is wholly irrelevant to the argument about the necessity of prayer that the so-called believers have belied their belief and that many places renowned for their sacred character have been razed to the ground. I hold it to be enough, and it is enough for my argument, if I can prove that there have been men in the world, and there are men today in existence, for whom prayer is positively the bread of life. I recommend to the correspondent the practice of going unobserved to mosques, temples and churches, without any preconceived ideas, and he will discover as I have discovered that there is something in them which appeals to the heart and which transforms those who go there, not for show, not out of shame or fear but out of simple devotion. It defies analysis. Nevertheless the fact stands that pureminded people going to the present places of pilgrimage which have become hot-beds of error, superstition, and even immorality, return from them purer for the act of worship. Hence the significant assurance in the Bhagavad Gita: 'I make return according to the spirit in which men worship Me.'

What the correspondent has written undoubtedly shows our present limitations which we must try as early as possible to get rid of. It is a plea for purification of religions, broadening of the outlook. That much needed reform is surely coming. There is a better world-consciousness, and may I say that even the reform we all hanker after needs intense prayer in order to achieve deeper purification of self? For without deeper purification of mankind in general, mutual toleration and mutual good-will are not possible.

*30th December, 1926*

## SHRADDHANANDJI—THE MARTYR

BY M. K. GANDHI

The expected has happened. Swami Shraddhanandji passed a day or two at the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati, now about six months ago, and told me, in the course of his conversations that he often received letters threatening his life. Where is the reformer who has not a price put upon his head? There was, therefore, nothing untoward in his getting the letters. And there is nothing untoward in the assassination having taken place.

Swamiji was a reformer, he was a man of action not of words. His was a living belief. He had suffered for it. He was bravery personified. He never quailed before danger. He was a warrior. And a warrior loves to die, not on a sick-bed, but on the battlefield.

Saraddhanandji became seriously ill about a month ago. Dr. Ansari was, as his physician, giving him all the loving attention he was capable of giving. The telegram I received from his son, Indra, in reply to my inquiry at the beginning of the month, was that he was better and that he wanted my 'love and prayer' both of which he had before the asking.

God had willed for him a martyr's death and so though he was still on the sick-bed, he died at the hands of an assassin who had asked to be admitted to the Swamiji's presence for the purpose of holding a religious discourse on Islam, who was admitted at the Swamiji's instance, and who, under pretence of wanting water to quench his thirst, had Swamiji's faithful servant, Dharam Singh, sent out to fetch water, and who, in absence of the servant, deposited two death wounds in the patient's breast, as he was lying in his bed.\* We have not the last words of the Swamiji, but if I knew him at all, I have no doubt that he prayed to his God to forgive him who knew not that he was doing anything wrong. In the language of the Gita, therefore, 'happy the warrior who achieves such a blessed death.'

Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, i. e. truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest of friends. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is like sleep a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr. I cannot, therefore, mourn over this death. He and his are to be envied. For though Shraddhanandji is dead, he is yet living. He is living in a truer sense than when he moved about in our midst in his gaint body. The family in which he was born, the nation to which he belonged are to be congratulated upon so glorious a death as this. He lived a hero. He has died a hero.

But there is another side to the shield. I regard myself as a friend of the Mussalmans. They are my blood brothers. Their wrongs are my wrongs. I share their sorrows and their joys. Any evil deed done by a Mussalman hurts me just as much as that done by a Hindu. This foul deed has been done by one who bears a Mussalman name. As a friend of the Mussalmans, therefore, I deeply regret the event. The joy of the death is thus tempered by the sorrow that an erring, misguided brother has been the cause of it. Martyrdom can, therefore, never be wished for. It becomes a thing of joy only when it comes unsought. We may not gloat over the errors of the least of our fellows.

But the fact is that an error often refuses to become patent until it becomes atrocious. It dies only after being completely disgraced.

This tragedy has a national importance. It draws pointed attention to an evil that is eating into the vitals of the nation. Both Hindus and Mussalmans have the choice before them. We are both on our trial.

Hindus may, by being resentful, disgrace Hinduism and postpone the unity that must come. They can by selfrestraint show themselves to be worthy of the message of the Upanishads and of Yudhishtira who was the embodiment of forgiveness.

Let us not ascribe the crime of an individual to a whole community. Let us not harbour the spirit of retaliation. Let us not think of the wrong as done by a Mussalman against a Hindu, but of an erring brother against a hero.

Mussalmans have an ordeal to pass through. There can be no doubt that they are too free with the knife and the pistol. The sword is an emblem of Islam. But Islam was born in an environment where the sword was and still remains the supreme law. The message of Jesus has proved ineffective because the environment was unready to receive it. So with the message of the Prophet. The sword is yet too much in evidence among Mussalmans. It must be sheathed if Islam is to be what it means—peace. There is danger of Mussalmans secretly endorsing the mad deed. It will be a calamity for them and the world. For ours is after all a world problem. Reliance upon the sword is wholly inconsistent with reliance upon God. There should be, on their part, unequivocal mass condemnation of the atrocity.

I wish to plead for Abdul Rashid. I do not know who he is. It does not matter to me what prompted the deed. The fault is ours. The newspaper man has become a walking plague. He spreads the contagion of lies and calumnies. He exhausts the foul vocabulary of his dialect, and injects his virus into the unsuspecting, and often receptive minds of his readers. Leaders 'intoxicated with the exuberance of their own language' have not known to put a curb upon their tongues or pens. Secret and insidious propaganda has done its dark and horrible work, unchecked and unabashed. It is therefore we the educated and the semi-educated class, that are responsible for the hot fever which possessed Abdul Rashid.

It is unnecessary to discriminate and apportion the blame between the rival parties. Where both are to blame, who can arbitrate with golden scales and fix the exact ratio of blame? It is no part of self-defence to tell lies or exaggerate.

It is too much to hope, but Swamiji was great enough to warrant the hope that his blood may wash us of our guilt,



cleanse our hearts and cement these two mighty divisions of the human family.

I must deal with the life of Swamiji as I knew him, in the next issue of *Young India*.

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5th June, 1924

### BRAHMACHARYA OR SELF-CONTROL

BY M. K. GANDHI

[The following is Mahadev Desai's translation of an article I wrote on this delicate subject in *Navajivan* of 25th May 1924. I gladly publish it in *Young India* as I have before me many letters from the other parts of India on the same subject. The stray thoughts collected together in the article might be of some help to those who are earnestly striving for a pure life. My inquirers have been all Hindus and naturally the article is addressed to them. The last paragraph is the most important and operative part. The names Allah or God carry with them the same potency. The idea is to realise the presence of God in us. All sins are committed in secrecy. The moment we realise that God witnesses even our thoughts we shall be free. M.K.G.]

It is not easy to write on this subject. But the desire has been uppermost in my mind to share with my readers some grains out of the vast store of my experience. Some letters I have received have whetted the desire.

A friend asks : 'What is Brahmacharya ? Is it possible to practise it to perfection ? If possible, do you do so ?'

The full and proper meaning of Brahmacharya is search of Brahman. Brahman pervades every being and can therefore be searched by diving into and realising the inner self. This realisation is impossible without complete control of the senses. Brahmacharya thus means control in thought, word and action, of all the senses at all times and in all places.

A man or woman completely practising Brahmacharya is

absolutely free from passion. Such a one therefore lives nigh unto God, is Godlike.

I have no doubt that it is possible to practise such Brahmacharya in thought, word and action to the fullest extent. I am sorry to say that I have not yet reached that perfect state of Brahmacharya, though I am every moment of my life striving to reach it. I have not given up hope of reaching that state in this very body. I have gained control over the body. I can be master of myself during my waking hours. I have fairly succeeded in learning to control my tongue. But I have yet to cover many stages in the control of my thoughts. They do not come and go at my bidding. My mind is thus constantly in a state of insurrection against itself.

In my waking moments, however, I can stop my thoughts from colliding with one another. I may say that in the waking state the mind is secure against the approach of evil thoughts. But in the hours of sleep, control over the thoughts is much less. When asleep, the mind would be swayed by all sorts of thoughts, by unexpected dreams, and by desire for things done and enjoyed by the flesh before. Such thoughts or dreams when unclean are followed by the usual consequences. Whilst such experiences are possible a person cannot be said to be free from all passion. The deviation is, however, diminishing, but has not yet ceased. If I had complete mastery over my thoughts I should not have suffered from the diseases of pleurisy, dysentery and appendicitis that I did during the last ten years. I believe that a healthy soul should inhabit a healthy body. To the extent, therefore, that the soul grows into health and freedom from passion, to that extent the body also grows into that state. This does not mean that a healthy body should be necessarily strong in flesh. A brave soul often inhabits a lean body. After a certain stage the flesh diminishes in proportion to the growth of the soul. A perfectly healthy body may be very fleshless. A muscular body is often heir to many an ill. Even if it is apparently free from disease, it is not immune from infections, contagions and the like. A perfectly healthy body, on the contrary,

is proof against all these. Incorruptible blood has the inherent virtue of resisting all infections.

Such an equipoise is indeed difficult of attainment. Otherwise I should have reached it, because my soul is witness to the fact that I would spare no pains to attain to this perfect state. No outward obstacle can stand between me and that state. But it is not easy for all, at least for me, to efface past *samskaras*. But the delay has not in the least dismayed me. For I have a mental picture of that perfect state. I have even dim glimpses of it. The progress achieved fills me with hope, rather than despair. But even if I depart from this body before the hope is fulfilled, I would not think that I had failed. For I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted.

I have said so much about myself for the simple reason that my correspondents and others like them may have patience and self-confidence. The soul is one in all. Its possibilities are therefore the same for every one. With some, it has manifested itself, with others it has yet to do so. Patient striving would carry everyone through and to the same experience.

I have heretofore discussed Brahmacharya in its wider meaning. The ordinary accepted sense of Brahmacharya is the control in thought, word and action of animal passion. And it is quite proper thus to restrict its meaning. It has been thought to be very difficult to practise this Brahmacharya. This control of the carnal desire has been so very difficult, has become nearly impossible, because equal stress has not been laid on the control of the palate. It is also the experience of our physicians that a body enfeebled by disease is always a favourite abode of carnal desire, and Brahmacharya by an enfeebled race is difficult to practise naturally.

I have talked above of a lean but healthy body. Let no one understand me to have deprecated physical culture. I have talked of Brahmacharya in its perfect aspect in my very crude language. It is likely therefore to be misunderstood. But one who would practise complete control of all the senses must needs welcome

the waning of the flesh. With the extinction of attachment to the flesh, comes the extinction of the desire to have muscular strength.

But the body of a true Brahmachari is bound to be exceptionally fresh and wiry. This Brahmacharya is something un-earthly. He who is not swayed by carnal desire even in his sleep is worthy of all adoration. The control of every other sense shall be 'added unto' him.

With reference to this restricted Brahmacharya, another friend writes: 'I am miserable. I am haunted by carnal thoughts even whilst I am in my office, on the road, by night and day, whilst reading and working, even whilst I am praying. How is a wandering mind to be controlled? How is one to learn to look upon every woman as one's mother? How is the eye to radiate forth purest love? How can evil thoughts be eradicated? I have before me your article on Brahmacharya, (written years ago) but it has failed to help me.'

This condition is heart-rending. Many suffer from it. But so long as the mind is engaged in a perpetual struggle against evil thoughts, there is no reason to despair. When the eye offends, it should be closed. When the ears offend, they should be stopped. It is best always to walk with down-cast eyes. They will then have no occasion to go astray. All haunts of filthy talk or unclean music should be avoided. There should be full control of the palate. I know that he who has not mastered his palate cannot master the carnal desire. It is very difficult I know to master the palate. But mastery of the palate means automatic mastery of the other senses. One of the rules for control of the palate is to abjure completely or, as much as possible, all condiments. A more difficult rule is to cultivate the feeling that the food we eat is to sustain the body, never to satisfy the palate. We take air not for the pleasure of it but to breathe. We drink water to quench our thirst; and so should we take food to satisfy our hunger. But from childhood upwards, we are brought up to a different habit. Our parents make us cultivate all sorts of tastes, not with a view to our nourishment,

but for indulging their affection for us. We thus get spoiled. We have therefore to struggle against the results of our own upbringing,

There is however a golden rule for gaining control of the carnal desire. It is the repetition of the divine word 'Rama' or such other mantra. The Dwadasha mantra also serves the same purpose. Every one must select the mantra after his heart. I have suggested the word 'Rama' because I was brought up to repeat it in my childhood and I have ever got strength and sustenance out of it. Whichever mantra is selected, one should be identified with it whilst repeating it. I have not the least doubt of ultimate success as a result of repetition of some such mantra in complete faith, even though other thoughts distract the mind. The mantra will be the light of one's life and will keep one from all distress. Such holy mantras should obviously never be used for material ends. If their use is strictly restricted to the preservation of morals, the results attained will be startling. Of course a mere repetition of such a mantra parrot-wise would be of no avail. One should throw his whole soul into it. The parrot repeats it like a machine. We should repeat it with a view to preventing the approach of unwelcome thoughts and with full faith in the efficacy of the mantra to that end.

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*29th January, 1925*

## THE DUTY OF STUDENTS

BY M. K. GANDHI

During his recent visit to Bhavnagar Mr. Gandhi was invited to address the students of the local Samaldas College. He addressed them in Gujarati on the subject above mentioned. The following summary will be of general interest :

I have to speak today on the *dharma* or duty of students. That *dharma* is as easy as it is difficult. According to Hinduism, the student is a Brahmachari, and Brahmacharya-

ashram is the student-state. Celebacy is a narrow interpretation of Brahmacharya. The original meaning is the life or the state of a student. That means control of the senses, but the whole period of study or acquirement of knowledge by means of control of the senses came to be regarded as Brahmacharya-ashram. This period of life necessarily means very much taking and very little giving. We are mainly recipients in this state—taking whatever we can get from parents, teachers and from the world. But the taking, if it carries—as it did—no obligation of simultaneous repayment it necessarily carried an obligation to repay the whole debt, with compound interest, at the proper time. That is why the Hindus maintain *Brahmacharyashram* as a matter of religious duty.

The life of a Brahmachari and a *Sanyasi* are regarded as spiritually similar. The Brahmachari must needs be a *Sanyasi* if he is to be a Brahmachari. For the *Sanyasi* it is a matter of choice. The four *Ashramas* of Hinduism have nowadays lost their sacred character, and exist, if at all, in name. The life of the student Brahmachari is poisoned at the very spring. Though there is nothing left of the *Ashramas* today which we may hold up to the present generation as something to learn from and copy, we may still hark back to the ideals that inspired the original *Ashramas*.

How can we understand the duty of students today? We have fallen so much from the ideal. The parents take the lead in giving the wrong direction. They feel that their children should be educated only in order that they may earn wealth and position. Education and knowledge are thus being prostituted, and we look in vain for the peace, innocence and bliss that the life of a student ought to be. Our students are weighed down with cares and worries, when they should really be 'careful for nothing. They have simply to receive and to assimilate. They should know only to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on taking in indiscriminately we would be no better than machines. We are

thinking, knowing beings and we must in this period distinguish truth from untruth, sweet from bitter language, clean from unclean things and so on. But the student's path today is strewn with more difficulties than the one of distinguishing good from bad things. He has to fight the hostile atmosphere around him. Instead of the sacred surroundings of a *Rishi Guru's* ashram and his paternal care, he has the atmosphere of a broken down home, and the artificial surroundings created by the modern system of education. The *Rishis* taught their pupils without books. They only gave them few *mantras* which the pupils treasured in their memories and translated in practical life. The present day student has to live in the midst of heaps of books, sufficient to choke him. In my own days Reynolds was much in vogue among students and I escaped him only because I was far from being a brilliant student and never cared to peep out of the school text books. When I went to England however I saw that these novels were tabooed in decent circles and that I had lost nothing by having never read them. Similarly there are many other things which a student might do worse than reject. One such thing is the craze for earning a career. Only the Grihastha—house holder—has to think of it, it is none of the brahmachari students' dharma. He has to acquaint himself with the condition of things in his own country, try to realise the magnitude of the crisis with which it is faced, and the work that it requires of him. I dare say many amongst you read newspapers. I do not think I can ask you to eschew them altogether. But I would ask you to eschew everything of ephemeral interest, and I can tell you that newspapers afford nothing of permanent interest. They offer nothing to help the formation of character. And yet I know the craze for newspapers. It is pitiable, terrible. I am talking in this strain as I have myself made some experiments in education. Out of those experiments I learnt the meaning of education, I discovered Satyagraha and Non-co-operation and launched on those new experiments. I assure you I have never regretted having tried these last, nor have I undertaken them

simply with the object of winning political Swaraj. I have ventured to place them even before students. For they are innocent. They are today summed up in the spinning-wheel. First it was hailed with ridicule, then came scorn, and presently it will be received with joy. The Congress has adopted it, and I would not hesitate to offer it respectfully even to Lord Reading. I would not hesitate to do so, as I know that I would lose nothing in so doing. The loser would be Lord Reading if he chose to reject it. I did not hesitate to deliver the message of the Wheel to the Bishop of Calcutta when I had the honour to make his acquaintance in Delhi. I did the same with Col. Maddock, and when Mrs. Maddock sailed for England I presented her with a Khaddar towel, as a memento, and asked her to carry the message from house to house.

I am not tired of preaching the message of the Wheel on all occasions at all hours, because it is such an innocent thing, and yet so potent of good. It may not be relishing, but no health-giving food has the relish of spicy foods so detrimental to health. And so the Gita in a memorable text asks all thinking people to take things of which the first taste is bitter, but which are ultimately conducive to immortality. Such a thing today is the spinning wheel and its product. There is no yagna (sacrifice) greater than spinning, calculated to bring peace to the troubled spirit, to soothe the distracted student's mind, to spiritualise his life. I have today no better prescription for the country—not even the Gayatri—in this practical age which looks for immediate results. Gayatri I would fain offer, but I cannot promise immediate result, whilst the thing I offer is such as you can take to, with God's name on your lips, and expect immediate result. An English friend wrote saying his English commonsense told him that spinning was an excellent hobby. I said to him, 'It may be a hobby for you, for us it is the Tree of Plenty.' I do not like many Western ways, but there are certain things in them for which I can not disguise my . Their 'hobby' is a thing full of meaning. Col. Maddock, who was an efficient Surgeon and took great delight in his task,



did not devote all his hours to his work. Two hours he had set apart for his hobby which was gardening and it was this gardening that lent zest and savour to his life.

I have pleasure therefore in placing the spinning-wheel before you, even as a hobby if you will, in order that your life may have zest and savour, in order that you may find peace and bliss. It will help you to lead a life of Brahmacharya. Faith is a thing of great moment in the student-state. There are so many things which you have to take for granted. You accept them simply because you get them from your teacher. Some propositions in geometry, for instance, were very difficult of comprehension for me. I took them for granted and today I not only can understand them, but can lose myself in a study of geometry as easily as I can do in my present work. If you have faith, and ply the Wheel, you take it from me that some day you will admit that what an old man once told you about it was literally true. No wonder that one learned in the lore applied the following text from the Gita to the spinning-wheel:

‘In this there is no waste of effort; neither is there any obstacle. Even a little practice of this Dharma saves a man from dire calamity’.

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*12th March, 1925*

## BIRTH CONTROL

BY M. K. GANDHI

It is not without the greatest hesitation and reluctance that I approach this subject. The question of using artificial methods for birth control has been referred to me by correspondents ever since my return to India. Though I have answered them personally, I have never hitherto dealt with the subject publicly. My attention was drawn to the subject, now thirty-five years ago, when I was a student in England. There was then a hot controversy raging between a purist who would not countenance

anything but natural means and a doctor who advocated artificial means. It was at that early time in my life that I became, after leanings for a brief period towards artificial means, a convinced opponent of them. I now observe that in some Hindi papers the methods are described in a revoltingly open manner which shocks one's sense of decency. I observe, too, that one writer does not hesitate to cite my name as among the supporters of artificial methods of birth control. I cannot recall a single occasion when I spoke or wrote in favour of such methods. I have seen also two distinguished names having been used in support. I hesitate to publish them without reference to their owners.

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or Brahmacharya. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practice it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind, if instead of devising artificial means of birth control they will find out the means of self-control. The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.

Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make man and woman reckless. And respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease. It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who over-eats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonics or other medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended. The

reasoning underlying the use of artificial methods is that indulgence is a necessity of life. Nothing can be more fallacious. Let those who are eager to see the births regulated explore the lawful means devised by the ancients and try to find out how they can be revived. An enormous amount of spade-work lies in front of them. Early marriages are a fruitful source of adding to the population. The present mode of life has also a great deal to do with the evil of unchecked procreation. If these causes are investigated and dealt with, society will be morally elevated. If they are ignored by impatient zealots and if artificial methods become the order of the day, nothing but moral degradation can be the result. A society that has already become enervated through a variety of causes will become still further enervated by the adoption of artificial methods. Those men therefore who are light-heartedly advocating artificial methods cannot do better than study the subject afresh, stay their injurious activity and popularise Brahmacharya both for the married and the unmarried. That is the only noble and straight method of birth control.

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*2nd April, 1925*

### SOME ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED

BY M. K. GANDHI

My article on birth control has, as was to be expected, given rise to energetic correspondence in favour of artificial methods. I select three typical letters. There is a fourth letter which is largely theological. I therefore omit it. Here is one of the three letters :

"I have read your article on 'Birth Control' with great interest. The subject is, at present, exercising the minds of many educated men. Last year, we had long and heated debates. They proved at least this much that, young men are acutely interested in this problem, that there is a great deal of prudery and prejudice about it, that in a free and open discussion one's sense of 'decency' is rarely shocked. Your article has set me

thinking afresh, and I appeal to you for some more light, to dispel many doubts, that arise in my mind.

"I agree that 'there can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control.' I further agree that 'Brahmacharya is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practice it.' But I ask whether the problem is not one of 'Birth Control,' than of 'Self-Control.' If so, let us see if self-control is a feasible method of birth control, for the average person.

"I believe that this problem can be examined from two different points of view, that of the individual and society. It is the duty of each individual to restrain his carnal passions, and thus evolve his spiritual strength. At all times, there are a few such persons, of great moral fibre, who set up this noble standard before themselves, and will follow no other. But I wonder whether they have any perception of the problem of birth-control, which they are intent on solving. A sanyasin is out for salvation, but not for birth-control.

"But can this method solve an economic, social, and political question of the greatest importance to the vast majority of people within a reasonable period of time? It presses for solution on every thinking and prudent grihastha even now. How many children can one feed, clothe, educate, and settle in life is a question which brooks no delay. Knowing human nature, as you do, can you reasonably expect large numbers completely abstaining from sexual pleasure, after the need for progeny has been satisfied? But I believe you would permit a rational and temperate exercise of the sexual instinct, as is recommended by our *Smritikaras*. The vast majority may be asked neither to indulge the passion nor to repress it, but only to regulate it. But, even if this were possible, would this method control births? I believe that we shall then have better people, but not fewer people. In fact, the problem of population would become more acute, as an efficient population grows faster than an inefficient one. The art of cattle-breeding does not give us few cattle, but more and better cattle.

"I agree that 'union is meant not for pleasure but for bring-

ing forth progeny.' But you must grant that pleasure is the chief if not the only inducement to it. It is Nature's lure to fulfil its purpose. How many would fulfil it, and do fulfil it, where pleasure is lacking? How many go for pleasure and get progeny, and how many go for progeny, and also find pleasure? You say that 'Union is a crime, when the desire for progeny is absent.' It beautifully suits a sanyasin, like you to say so. For have you not also said that he who owns more than he needs is a 'thief' and a 'robber,' that who loves not others more, loves himself less? But why be so hard on poor and weak mortals? To them, a little pleasure, without desire for progeny, would soothe and meet natural changes, in body and mind. The fear of progeny would, in several cases, agitate nerves, and in some cases delay marriage. The desire for progeny, in normal cases, would cease after a few years of marriage. Would union after that be a crime? Do you think that a man, afraid of committing that 'crime' would be morally superior, by sitting tight over the safety valve of his restless passions? After all, why do you tolerate 'thieves,' who hold more than they need, but not the 'criminals' who unite after the desire for progeny is satisfied? Is it because 'thieves' are too numerous and powerful to reform?

"Lastly, you allege that 'artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless.' This is a heavy charge, if true. I ask whether 'public opinion' has ever been strong enough to restrain sexual excess. I am aware of drunkards being restrained by fear of such opinion. But I am also aware of the sayings that 'God never sends mouths but he sends meat also,' that 'Children are born because of God's Will'; of the prejudice that a large progeny is a proof of manliness. I know cases where such opinion gives a license to husbands over wives and considers the exercise of the sex instinct as the main bond of marriage. Besides, is it certain that 'adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration?' There are methods and methods, and I believe that Science has discovered, or will soon discover innocuous methods. This is not beyond the wit of man.

'But it seems that you would not allow their use, in any case, for, 'it is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts.' This is unexceptionable, only you assume that even a moderate exercise of one's appetite, without desire for progeny, is immoral. Moreover I ask, whoever is restrained by the fear of progeny, the consequences of one's acts. In any case, many are impelled to seek the advice of quacks, reckless of their health and happiness. How many abortions have not been caused, while 'seeking to escape the consequences of one's acts.' But, even if 'fear proved an effective restraint, the 'moral' results would be poor indeed. Besides, by what system of justice should the sins of parents be visited upon the heads of their progeny and the imprudence of individuals hurt society? It is true that 'Nature is relentless, and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws.' But why assume that the use of artificial methods is such a violation. None calls the use of artificial teeth, eyes and limbs as 'unnatural'. That alone is unnatural which does not secure our well-being. I do not believe that mankind is by nature vicious, and that the use of these methods will make it worse. There is enough of license even now, not even India excepted. It is as easy to prove that this new power will be properly used as that it may be abused. But let us recognise that man is on the point of winning this tremendous power over Nature, and that we can ignore it only at our cost. Wisdom lies in controlling it, not in shunning it. Some of the noblest workers seek the propagation of these methods, not for indulgence, but to help men to self-control. Let us also not forget that woman and her needs have been ignored too long. She means to have her say in this matter, for she refuses to allow man to treat her body 'as tilth for offspring.

"The strain of modern civilization is too great to permit her to rear a large family with all the drudgery and worry it means. Dr. Marie Stopes and Miss Ellen Key would never seek the 'nervous prostration' of woman. The methods they suggest can be made effective chiefly by woman, and are more

likely to evolve wise motherhood than reckless indulgence. In any case there are circumstances when a lesser evil may avoid a greater. There are dangerous diseases which must be avoided even at the cost of 'nervous prostration'. There are natural periods of lactation when union is unavoidable but injurious if fruitful. There are women, otherwise healthy, who can bear children only at a serious risk to their lives.

"I neither wish nor expect you to turn into a propagandist of birth control. You are at your best in keeping the light of Truth and Chastity burning in its purity and holding it before mortals who seek it. But a prudent parent will seek that light more than an imprudent one. Who realises the need of birth control may easily evolve self-control. The present license, thoughtlessness and ignorance are so great that even you cry, as if in a wilderness. There is great need for more enlightened discussion than your apologetic and 'reluctant' article permits. If you cannot join in it you must at least recognise it, and if need be, guide it betimes, for there are breakers ahead; and it will serve no purpose to blink our eyes at the danger, and 'hesitate on approaching this subject'."

Let me clear the ground by saying that I have not written for sanyasins or as a sanayasin. I do not claim to be one in the accepted sense of the term. My observations are based upon unbroken personal practice with a slight aberration for a period of twenty five years and that of those who have joined me in the experiment for a long enough period to warrant certain conclusions. In the experiment both young and old men and women are included. I claim a certain degree of scientific accuracy for the experiment. It has undoubtedly a strictly moral basis but it originated in the desire for birth control. My own case was peculiarly for that purpose. Tremendous moral consequences developed as an afterthought though in a perfectly natural sequence. I venture to claim that by judicious treatment it is possible to observe self-control without much difficulty. Indeed it is a claim put forth not merely by me but German and other Nature-cure practitioners. The latter teach

that water treatment or earth compresses and a non-heating and chiefly fruitarian diet soothes the nervous system and brings animal passions under easy subjection whilst it, at the same time, invigorates the system. The same result is claimed by Raja Yogis for scientifically regulated Pranayam without reference to the higher practices. Neither the Western nor the ancient Indian treatment is intended for the Sanyasin but essentially for the householder. If it is contended that birth control is necessary for the nation because of over-population, I dispute the proposition. It has never been proved. In my opinion, by a proper land system better agriculture and a supplementary industry this country is capable of supporting twice as many people as there are in it today. But I have joined hands with the advocates of birth control in India from the standpoint of the present political condition of the country.

I do suggest that men must cease to indulge their animal passion after the need for progeny has ceased. The remedy of self control can be made popular and effective. It has never had a trial with the educated class. That a class has not yet, thanks to the joint family system, felt the pressure. Those that have, have not given a thought to the moral issues involved in the question. Save for stray lectures on Brahmacharya no systematic propaganda has been carried for advocating self-control for the definite purpose of limiting progeny. On the contrary the superstition of a larger family being an auspicious thing and therefore desirable still persists. Religious teachers do not generally teach the restriction of progeny in given circumstances is as much a religious obligation as procreation may be under certain other circumstances.

I am afraid that advocates of birth control take it for granted that indulgence in animal passion is a necessity of life and in itself a desirable thing. The solicitude shown for the fair sex is most pathetic. In my opinion it is an insult to the fair sex to put up her case in support of birth control by artificial methods. As it is, man has sufficiently degraded her for his lust, and artificial methods, no matter how well-meaning the



advocates may be, will still further degrade her. I know that there are modern women who advocate these methods. But I have little doubt that the vast majority of women will reject them as inconsistent with their dignity. If man means well by her, let him exercise control over himself. It is not she who tempts. In reality man being the aggressor is the real culprit and the tempter.

I urge the advocates of artificial methods to consider the consequences. Any large use of the methods is likely to result in the dissolution of the marriage bond and in free love. If a man may indulge in animal passion for the sake of it, what is he to do whilst he is, stay away from his home for any length of time or when he is engaged as a soldier in a protracted war or when he is widowed or when his wife is too ill to permit him the indulgence without injury to her health notwithstanding the use of artificial methods?

But says another correspondent :

"With respect to your article on Birth Control in a recent issue, may I respectfully point out that you start by begging the whole question when you assert that artificial methods are injurious. In the Contraceptive section of the last International Birth Control Conference (London, 1922), attended by members of the medical profession only, the following resolution was passed with 3 dissentients out of 164 present: 'That this meeting of the Medical members of the Fifth International Birth Control Conference wishes to point out that Birth Control by hygienic contraceptive devices is absolutely distinct from abortion in its physiological, legal and moral aspects. It further records its opinion that there is no evidence that the best contraceptive methods are injurious to health or conclusive to sterility.'

"Now it seems to me that the opinion of such a large body of medical men and women including some of the most eminent names in the profession can hardly be set aside with a stroke of the pen. You say: 'Adoption of artificial methods must lead to imbecility and nervous prostration.' Why 'must'? I venture

to submit that modern scientific methods do not lead to anything of the kind, though the use of harmful methods through ignorance may. This is only one more argument why proper methods should be taught to all who are likely to need them, i.e. to all adults capable of reproduction. You blame these methods for being artificial, and still want medical men to find out 'means of self-control'. I do not quite understand what you mean, but as you refer to medical men, would not any 'means of self-control' devised by them be equally artificial? You say: 'Union is meant not for pleasure, but for bringing forth progeny.' Meant by whom? By God? In that case, what did he create the sexual instinct for? You further say: 'Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws.' But Nature at any rate is not a person as God is supposed to be, and does not issue orders to anybody. It is not possible to violate Nature's laws. The consequences of actions are inevitable in Nature. Good and bad are words that we apply to them. The people who use artificial methods to take the consequences of their acts like those who don't. Your argument, therefore, does not mean anything unless you can prove that artificial methods are injurious. I assert, from observation and experiment that they are not, provided proper methods are used. Actions must be judged moral or immoral according to their results and not by *a priori* assumptions as to their morality.

"The method you propose was also advised by Malthus, but is absolutely impracticable except for a few selected individuals like you. What is the use of advocating methods which cannot be practised? The benefits of Brahmacharya have been greatly exaggerated. Modern medical authorities (I mean those who have no religious prejudices) think that it is positively harmful beyond the age of 22 or so. It is religious prejudice which makes you think that sexual union is a sin except for procreation. As nobody can guarantee the result beforehand, you condemn everybody either to complete abstinence or to take the chance of sinning. Physiology does not

teach this and it is now too late in the day to ask people to ignore science in favour of dogma."

This writer has taken up an uncompromising attitude. I hope I have given enough illustrations to show that self-restraint and not indulgence must be regarded as the law of life, if we are to accept and retain the sanctity of the marriage tie. I have not begged the question for I do contend that artificial methods, however proper they may be, are harmful. They are harmful not perhaps in themselves but because they increase the appetite which grows with every feed. The mind that is so tuned as to regard indulgence not only lawful but even desirable will simply feed itself on the indulgence and will at last become so weak as to lose all strength of will. I do maintain that every act of indulgence means loss of precious vitality so needful to keep a man or woman strong in body, mind and soul. Though I have now mentioned the soul, I have purposely eliminated it from the discussion which is intended merely to combat the arguments advanced by my correspondents who seem to disregard its existence. The tuition that is needed for much-married and enervated India is not that of indulgence with artificial means but complete restraint, if only for the sake of regaining lost vitality. Let the immoral medicines whose advertisements disfigure our press be a warning to the advocates of birth control. It is not prudery or false modesty which restrains me from discussing the subject. The restraining force is the certain knowledge that the devitalised and enervated youth of the country fall an easy prey to the specious arguments advanced in favour of indulgence.

It is perhaps now hardly necessary for me to combat the medical certificate produced by the second correspondent. It is wholly irrelevant to my case. I neither affirm nor deny that proper artificial methods injure the organs or produce sterility. No array, however brilliant, of medical men can disprove the ruin which I have witnessed of hundreds of youths who have indulged their passions even though it may be with their own wives.

The analogy drawn by the first writer from false teeth seems to me to be inapplicable. False teeth are indeed artificial and unnatural but they may serve a necessary purpose. Whereas artificial methods are like antidotes taken by a man who wants to eat not for satisfying hunger but for pleasing the palate. Eating for the sake of pleasure is a sin like animal indulgence for the sake of it.

The last letter is interesting for the information it gives :

"The question is now vexing the Governments of the world. I refer to your article on ' Birth Control '. You doubtless know the antipathy of the American Government towards its propagation. You have no doubt also heard about the free sanction given to it by an Eastern Power—I mean the Empire of Japan. The one rules out birth control altogether—whether as a result of artificial means or natural ones—for reasons best known to everyone. The other sponsors it for reasons also universally known. In my opinion, there is nothing to admire in the action of the first. Is there much, however, to despise in the step of the second? Don't you think the Japanese Government should be given credit at least for facing facts? They must stop procreation; they must also take human nature at its present worth. Is not birth control, as at present understood in the West, the only way out for them? You will say: ' An emphatic No.' But may I ask if the course you suggest is practicable? It may be very ideal, but is it practical? Can humanity be expected to forego sexual pleasure to any very appreciable degree? It may be easy to find a glorious few who practise self-control or Brahmacharya. Can this method, however, be depended upon for any mass movement in this direction? And nothing less than a mass movement is necessary in India to meet the situation."

I must confess my ignorance of the facts about America and Japan. Why Japan is advocating birth control I do not know. If the writer's facts are correct and if birth control by artificial methods is at all general in Japan I make bold to say that this fine nation is rushing headlong to its moral ruin.

I may be wholly wrong. My conclusions may be based on false data. But the advocates of artificial methods have need to be patient. They have no data at all except the modern examples. Surely it is too early to predict anything with any degree of certainty of a system of control which on the face of it seems to be repugnant to the moral sense of mankind. It is easy enough to trifle with youthful nature. It will be difficult to undo the evil effects of such trifling.

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### TRUTH vs. BRAHMACHARYA

A friend writes to Mahadeo Desai :

“You will remember that in an article on Brahmacharya published in *Navjivan* sometime ago—translated in *Young India* by you—Gandhiji admitted that he still had bad dreams. The moment I read it I felt that such admissions could have no wholesome effect, and I came to know later that my fear was justified.

“During our sojourn in England my friends and I kept our character unscathed in spite of temptations. We remained absolutely free from wine, woman and meat. But on reading Gandhiji’s article one of the friends exclaimed to me in despair : ‘If such is the case with Gandhiji even after his Herculean efforts, where are we? It is useless to attempt to observe Brahmacharya. Gandhiji’s confession has entirely changed my point of view. Take me to be lost from today.’ Not without some hesitation I tried to reason with him : ‘If the way is so difficult for men like Gandhiji, it is much more so for us, and we should therefore redouble our effort.’—the way Gandhiji or you would argue. But it was all in vain. A character that had been spotless so long was thus bespattered with mire. What would Gandhiji or you say if some one were to hold Gandhiji responsible for this fall?

“As long as I had only one such instance in mind, I did not write to you. You would possibly have put me off by

saying that it was an exceptional case. But there were more such instances and my fear has been more than justified.

"I know that there are certain things which are quite easy for Gandhiji to achieve, and which are impossible for me. But by the grace of God, I can say that something which may be impossible for even Gandhiji may be possible for me—It is this consciousness, or pride that has saved me from a fall, though the admission above-mentioned has completely disturbed my sense of security.

"Will you please invite Gandhiji's attention to this fact?—especially when he is just in the midst of his autobiography. It is certainly brave to say the truth and the naked truth, but the world and the readers of *Navjivan* and *Young India* will misunderstand him. I fear that one man's meat may be another man's poison."

The complaint does not come to me as a surprise. When Non-co-operation was in full swing, and when during the course of the struggle I confessed to an error of judgment a friend innocently wrote to me: 'Even if it was an error, you ought not to have confessed it. People ought to be encouraged to believe that there is at least one man who is infallible. You used to be looked upon as such. Your confession will now dishearten them.' This made me smile and also made me sad. I smiled at the correspondent's simpleness. But the very thought of encouraging people to believe a fallible man to be infallible was more than I could bear.

A knowledge of one as he is can always do good to the people, never any harm. I firmly believe that my prompt confessions of my errors have been all to the good for them. For me at any rate they have been a blessing.

And I may say the same thing of my admission about the bad dreams. It would do the world a lot of harm if I claimed to be a perfect brahmachari without being one. For it would sully brahmacharya and dim the lustre of truth. How dare I undervalue brahmacharya by false pretences? I can see today that the means I suggest for the observance of brahmacharya

are not adequate, are not found to be invariably efficacious, because I am not a perfect brahmachari. It would be an awful thing for the world to be allowed to believe that I was a perfect brahmachari, whilst I could not show the royal road to brahmacharya.

Why should it not be sufficient for the world to know that I am a genuine seeker, that I am wide awake, and that my striving is ceaseless and unbending? Why should not this knowledge be sufficient encouragement to others? It is wrong to deduce conclusions from false premises. It is wisest to draw them from things achieved. Why argue that because a man like me could not escape unclean thoughts, there is no hope for the rest? Why not rather argue that if a Gandhi who was once given to lust, can today live as friend and brother to his wife and can look upon the fairest damsel as his sister or daughter, there is hope for the lowliest and the lost? If God was merciful to one who was so full of lust, certainly all the rest would have his mercy too!

The friends of the correspondent who were put back because of a knowledge of my imperfections had never gone forward at all. It was a false virtue that fell at the first blast. The truth and observance of brahmacharya and similar eternal principles do not depend on persons imperfect as myself. They rest on the sure foundations of the penance of the many who strove for them and lived them in their fullness. When I have the fitness to stand alongside those perfect beings, there will be much more determination and force in my language than today. He whose thoughts do not wander and think evil, whose sleep knows no dreams and who can be wide awake even whilst asleep, is truly healthy. He does not need to take quinine. His incorruptible blood will have the inherent virtue of resisting all infections. It is for such a perfectly healthy state of body, mind, and spirit that I am striving. This knows no defeat or failure. I invite the correspondent, his friends of little faith, and others to join me in that striving, and I wish that they may go forward even like the correspondent quicker than I. Let my example

inspire those who are behind me with more confidence. All that I have achieved has been inspite of my weakness, inspite of my liability to passion,—and because of my ceaseless striving and infinite faith in God's grace.

No one need therefore despair. My Mahatmaship is worthless. It is due to my outward activities, due to my politics which is the least part of me and is therefore evanescent. What is of abiding worth is my insistence on truth, non-violence and brahmacharya which is the real part of me. That permanent part of me however small is not to be despised. It is my all. I prize even the failures and disillusionments which are but steps towards success.

[Brahmacharya means not merely mechanical celibacy, but it means complete control over all the organs and senses enabling one to attain perfect freedom from all passion and hence from sin in thought, word and deed. M. K. G.]

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*29th April, 1926*

## ON BRAHMACHARYA

BY M. K. GANDHI

I am being inundated with letters on Brahmacharya and means to its attainment. Let me repeat in different language what I have already said or written on previous occasions. Brahmacharya is not mere mechanical celibacy, it means complete control over all the senses and freedom from lust in thought, word and deed. As such it is the royal road to self-realisation or attainment of Brahman.

The ideal Brahmachari has not to struggle with sensual desire or desire for procreation; it never troubles him at all. The whole world will be to him one vast family, he will centre all his ambition in relieving the misery of mankind and the desire for procreation will be to him as gall and wormwood. He who has realised the misery of mankind in all its magnitude will never be stirred by passion. He will instinctly know the



fountain of strength in him, and he will ever persevere to keep it undefiled. His humble strength will command respect of the world, and he will wield an influence greater than that of the sceptred monarch.

But I am told that this is an impossible ideal, that I do not take count of the natural attraction between man and woman. I refuse to believe that the sensual affinity referred to here can be at all regarded as natural; in that case the deluge would soon be over us. The natural affinity between man and woman is the attraction between brother and sister, mother and son or father and daughter. It is that natural attraction that sustains the world. I should find it impossible to live, much less carry on my work, if I did not regard the whole of woman-kind as sisters, daughters or mothers. If I looked at them with lustful eyes, it would be the surest way to perdition.

Procreation is a natural phenomenon indeed, but within specific limits. A transgression of those limits imperils woman-kind, emasculates the race, induces disease, puts a premium on vice, and makes the world ungodly. A man in the grip of the sensual desire is a man without moorings. If such a one were to guide society, to flood it with his writings and men were to be swayed by them, where would society be? And yet we have the very thing happening to-day. Supposing a moth whirling round a light were to record the moments of its fleeting joy and we were to imitate it, regarding it as an exemplar, where would we be? No, I must declare with all the power I can command that sensual attraction even between husband and wife is unnatural. Marriage is meant to cleanse the hearts of the couple of sordid passions and take them nearer to God. Lustless love between husband and wife is not impossible. Man is not a brute. He has risen to a higher state after countless births in brute creation. He is born to stand, not to walk on all fours or crawl. Beastiality is as far removed from manhood, as matter from spirit.

In conclusion I shall summarise the means to its attainment.

The first step is the realisation of its necessity.

The next is gradual control of the senses. A Brahmachari must needs control his palate. He must eat to live, and not for enjoyment. He must see only clean things and close his eyes before anything unclean. It is thus a sign of polite breeding to walk with one's eyes towards the ground and not wandering about from object to object. A Brahmachari will likewise hear nothing obscene or unclean, smell no strong, stimulating, things. The smell of clean earth is far sweeter than the fragrance of artificial scents and essences. Let the aspirant to Brahmacharya also keep his hands and feet engaged in all the waking hours in healthful activity. Let him also fast occasionally.

The third step is to have clean companions—clean friends and clean books.

The last and not the least is prayer. Let him repeat *Ramanama* with all his heart regularly every day, and ask for divine grace.

None of these things are difficult for an average man or woman. They are simplicity itself. But their very simplicity is embarrassing. Where there is a will, the way is simple enough. Men have not the will for it and hence vainly grope. The fact that the world rests on the observance, more or less, of *Brahmacharya* or restraint, means that it is necessary and practicable.

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3rd June, 1926

## ABOLISH MARRIAGE!

BY M. K. GANDHI

A correspondent, whom I know well, raises an issue, I take it, for purely academic interest, because I know the views he has set out are not his. 'Is not our present day morality unnatural?' he asks. If it was natural it should have been the same everywhere in all ages, but every race and community

seems to have its own peculiar marriage laws and in enforcing them men have made themselves worse than beasts. For diseases which are unknown amongst animals are quite common amongst men; infanticide, abortions, child-marriages, which are impossible in the brute creation, are the curse of the society that holds up marriage as a sacrament, and no end of evil results have sprung from what we uphold as laws of morality. And the miserable condition of Hindu widows—what is it due to, but to the existing marriage laws? Why not go back to nature, and take a leaf out of the book of the brute creation?

I do not know whether the advocates of free love in the West resort to the argument summarised above or have any stronger reasons to put forth, but I am sure that the tendency to regard the marriage-bond as barbarous is distinctly Western. If the argument is also borrowed from the West, there is no difficulty about meeting it.

It is a mistake to institute a comparison between man and the brute and it is this comparison that vitiates the whole argument. For man is higher than the brute in his moral instincts and moral institutions. The law of nature as applied to the one is different from the law of nature as applied to the other. Man has reason, discrimination, and free will such as it is. The brute has no such thing. It is not a free agent, and knows no distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. Man, being a free agent, knows these distinctions, and when he follows his higher nature shows himself far superior to the brute, but when he follows his baser nature can show himself lower than the brute. Even the races regarded as the most uncivilised on earth accept some restriction on sexual relations. If it be said that the restriction is itself barbarous, then freedom from all restraints should be the law of man. If all men were to act according to this lawless law, there would be perfect chaos within twentyfour hours. Man being by nature more passionate than the brute, the moment all restraint is withdrawn, the lava of unbridled passion would overspread the whole earth and destroy mankind. Man is superior to the brute in as much as he is

capable of self-restraint and sacrifice, of which the brute is incapable.

Some of the diseases that are so common at the present day are the result of infringement of marriage laws. I should like to know a single instance of a man strictly observing the restraint of the marriage bond having suffered from the diseases the correspondent has in mind. Infanticide, child-marriages and the like, are also the result of the breach of marriage laws. For the law lays down that a man or woman shall choose a mate only when he or she has come of age, is healthy, and capable of restraint, and desires to have progeny. Those who strictly obey this law, and regard the marriage bond as a sacrament, have never an occasion to be unhappy or miserable. Where marriage is a sacrament, the union is not the union of bodies but the union of soul's indissoluble even by the death of either party. Where there is a true union of souls, the re-marriage of a widow or widower is unthinkable, improper and wrong. Marriages, where the true law of marriage is ignored, do not deserve the name. If we have very few true marriages now-a-days it, is not the institution of marriage that is to blame, but the prevailing form of it, which should be reformed.

The correspondent contends that marriage is no moral or religious bond but a custom, and a custom which is opposed to religion and morality and hence deserves to be abolished. I submit that marriage is a fence that protects religion. If the fence were to be destroyed religion would go to pieces. The foundation of religion is restraint and marriage is nothing but restraint. The man who knows no restraint has no hope of self-realisation. I confess it may be difficult to prove the necessity of restraint to an atheist or a materialist. But he who knows the perishable nature of flesh from the imperishable nature of the spirit, instinctively knows that self-realisation is impossible without self-discipline and self-restraint. The body may either be a play-ground of passion, or temple of self-realisation. If it is the latter, there is no room there for libertinism. The spirit needs must curb the flesh every moment.

Woman will be the apple of discord where the marriage bond is loose, where there is no observance of the law of restraint. If men were as unrestrained as the brutes they would straightway take the road to destruction. I am firmly of opinion that all the evils that the correspondent complains of can be eradicated not by abolishing marriage but by a systematic understanding and observance of the law of marriage.

I agree that whereas amongst some communities marriage is permitted amongst very near relations, it is prohibited among other communities, that whereas some communities forbid polygamy some permit it. Whilst one would wish that there was a uniform moral law accepted by all communities, the diversity does not point to the necessity of abolishing all restraint. As we grow wise in experience our morality will gain in uniformity. Even today the moral sense of the world holds up monogamy as the highest ideal and no religion makes polygamy obligatory. The ideal remains unaffected by the relaxation of practice according to time and place.

I need not reiterate my views regarding re-marriage of widows, as I consider re-marriage of virgin widows not only desirable but the bounden duty of all parents who happen to have such widowed daughters.

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*26th August, 1926*

### CURSE OF CHILD MARRIAGE

BY M. K. GANDHI

Mrs. Margaret E Cousins has sent me notes of a tragic case that appears to have just occurred in Madras and has arisen out of a child marriage, the girl being 13 years and the 'husband' 26. Hardly had the pair lived together for 13 days when the girl died of burning. The jury have found that she committed suicide owing to the unbearable and inhuman solicitation of the so-called husband. The dying deposition of the girl would go to show that the 'husband' had set fire to her clothes. Passion knows no prudence, no pity.

But how the girl died is beside the point. The indisputable facts are:

- (1) That the girl was married when she was only 13;
- (2) That she had no sexual desire inasmuch as she resisted the advances of the 'husband';
- (3) That the 'husband' did make cruel advances;
- (4) And that she is now no more.

It is irreligion, not religion, to give religious sanction to a brutal custom. The *Smritis* bristle with contradictions. The only reasonable deduction to be drawn from the contradictions is that the texts that may be contrary to known and accepted morality, more especially, to the moral precepts enjoined in the *Smritis* themselves, must be rejected as interpolations. Inspiring verses on self-restraint could not be written at the same time and by the same pen that wrote the verses encouraging the brute in man. Only a man innocent of self-restraint and steeped in vice could call it a sin not to marry a girl before she reached the age of monthly periods. It should be held sinful to marry a girl for several years after the periods begin. There cannot be even the thought of marriage before the periods begin. A girl is no more fit to bear children on beginning the periods than a lad is to procreate as soon as he grows the first hair on his upper lip.

This custom of child marriage is both a moral as well as a physical evil. For it undermines our morals and induces physical degeneration. By countenancing such customs we recede from God as well as Swaraj. A man who has no thought of the tender age of a girl has none of God. And undergrown men have no capacity for fighting battles of freedom or, having gained it, of retaining it. Fight for Swaraj means not mere political awakening but an all round awakening—social, educational, moral, economic and political.

Legislation is being promoted to raise the age of consent. It may be good for bringing a minority to book. But it is not legislation that will cure a popular evil, it is enlightened public opinion that can do it. I am not opposed to legislation in such

matters but I do lay greater stress on cultivation of public opinion. The Madras case would have been impossible if there had been a living public opinion against child marriages. The young man in question is not an illiterate labourer but an intelligent educated typist. It would have been impossible for him to marry or touch the girl, if public opinion had been against the marriage or the consummation of the marriage of girls of tender age. Ordinarily a girl under 18 years should never be given in marriage.

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*2nd September, 1926*

## CONSERVATION OF VITAL ENERGY

BY M. K. GANDHI

Readers of *Young India* will excuse me for discussing in public delicate problems I would fain discuss only in private. But the literature I have felt compelled to glance through, and the copious correspondence my review of M. Bureau's book has given rise to, demand a public discussion of a question which is of paramount interest to society. A Malabar correspondent writes :

"In your review of Monsieur Bureau's book it is stated that there is no case on record of celibacy or long abstinence producing any evil effects on us. In my own case, however, three weeks seem to be the utmost limit of beneficial abstinence. At the end of that period I usually feel a heaviness of body, a restlessness both of body and mind, leading to bad temper. Relief is obtained either by normal coitus or nature herself coming to the rescue by an involuntary discharge. Far from feeling weak or nervous, I become the next morning, calm and light, and am able to proceed to my work with added gusto.

"A friend of mine, however, developed distinctly injurious symptoms by abstinence. He is about 32 years of age, a strict vegetarian and a very religious person. He is

absolutely free from any vicious habits of body or mind. Yet he was having till two years ago, when he married, copious discharges at night followed by weakness of body and depression of spirits. Lately he developed excruciating pain in the abdominal region. On the advice of an Ayurvedic doctor he married and is now cured.

"I am intellectually convinced of the superiority of celibacy on which all our ancient Shastras agree. But the experiences I have quoted above make it clear that we are not able to absorb in our system the highly vital secretion of the testes, which, consequently, becomes a toxic product. I humbly request you, therefore, to publish, for the benefit of people like me who have no doubt as to the importance of chastity and abstention, in *Young India*, any device, such as the Asanas of Hatha Yoga, which will enable us to assimilate and absorb the vital product in our system."

The instances quoted by the correspondent are typical. In several such cases I have observed hasty generalisations from insufficient data. Ability to retain and assimilate the vital fluid is a matter of long training. It must be so, as it gives a strength to body and mind such as no other process does with equal effect. Drugs and mechanical contrivances may keep the body in a tolerable condition but they sap the mind and make it too weak to resist the play of a multitude of passions which like so many deadly foes surround every human being.

Too often do we expect results in spite of practices which are calculated to retard, if not to defeat them. The common mode of life is shaped to minister to our passions. Our food, our literature, our amusements, our business hours are all regulated so as to excite and feed our animal passions. The vast majority of us want to marry, to have children and generally to enjoy ourselves, be it ever so moderately. It will be so more or less to the end of time.

But there are, as there always have been, exceptions to the general rule. Men have wanted to live a life wholly dedicated to the service of humanity which is the same thing as saying 'to



God.' They will not divide their time between the rearing of a special family and the tending of the general human family. Necessarily, such men and women cannot afford to live the general life which is designed to promote the special, individual interest. Those who will be celibates for the sake of God need to renounce the laxities of life and find their enjoyment in its austere rigours. They may be 'in the world' but not 'of it.' Their food, their business, their hours of business, their recreations, their literature, their outlook upon life must therefore be different from the general.

It is now time to inquire whether the correspondent and his friend *desired* to live the life of complete abstention and whether they modelled it accordingly. If not, it is not difficult to understand the relief that the relaxation brought in the first case and the weakness that supervened in the second case. Marriage no doubt was the remedy in that second case, as in the vast majority of cases marriage is the most natural and desirable state when one finds oneself even against his will living the married life in his daily thought. The potency of thought unsuppressed but unembodied is far greater than that of thought embodied that is translated into action. And, when the action is brought under due control, it reacts upon and regulates the thought itself. Thought thus translated into action becomes a prisoner and is brought under subjection. Thus considered, marriage too is a mode of restraint.

I must not undertake in the course of a newspaper article to give detailed instructions for the guidance of those who desire to live 'a life of ordered restraint.' I must refer them to my 'Guide to Health' written years ago with that end in view. It does need revision in certain parts in the light of fresh experiences but there is nothing in the book which I would withdraw. General directions, however, may be safely reiterated here.

1. Eat moderately always leaving the dining room with a feeling of pleasant hunger.
2. Highly spiced and fatty vegetarian foods must be

avoided. Separate fat is wholly unnecessary when an adequate supply of milk is available. Little food suffices when there is little vital waste.

3. Both the body and the mind must be constantly occupied in clean pursuits.

4. Early to bed and early to rise is a necessity.

5. Above all a life of restraint presupposes an intense living desire for reunion with God. When there is heart perception of this central fact, there will be continuously increasing reliance upon God to keep His instrument pure and in order. The Gita says: 'Passions return again and again in spite of fasting but even the desire ceases when the Divine is seen. This is literally true.

The correspondent refers to Asana and Pranayama. I believe that they have an important place in the practice of restraint. But my own experiences in this direction, I am sorry to say, are not worth recording. There is, to my knowledge, little literature on the subject that is based on present experience. But it is a field worthy of exploration. I would however, warn the inexperienced reader from trying it or accepting the directions of the next Hath a Yogi he may meet with. Let him be sure that an abstemious and godly life is wholly sufficient to achieve the much to be desired restraint.

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*9th September, 1926*

## PLIGHT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

BY M. K. GANDHI

One who knows what she is writing about says:

'Until our boys learn to conserve their vital forces India will never have the men she should have. For nearly 17 years I have had charge of boys' schools in India. It is appalling to see the number of boys—Hindu, Mahomedan and Christian—who begin school life full of energy and enthusiasm and hope and end it physical wrecks. In

literally hundreds of cases, I have traced this directly to self-abuse, sodomy or early marriage. I have today the names of 42 boys guilty of sodomy and not a boy is over 13 years of age. Masters and house fathers will deny that these conditions exist but if the right tactics are used the trouble will be discovered and nearly always the boys will confess. A large per cent of the boys do confess having been taught by men—often their own relatives.”

This is no fanciful picture. It is truth suppressed by many school-masters who know. I have known it before. It was first brought to my notice by a Delhi school-master now nearly eight years ago. But I have kept silent merely discussing with individuals the remedies. The mischief is not confined to India. But it comes upon India with deadlier effect because of the curse of child marriage. A public discussion of this very difficult and delicate subject has become necessary because one sees in respectable newspapers the sexual passion discussed with a freedom that would not have been possible of a few years back.

The fashion of regarding the sexual act as natural, necessary, moral and conducive to mental and physical health has accentuated the evil. The advocacy by the cultured men of the free use of contraceptives has created an atmosphere favouring the growth of the sexual microbe. The tender and receptive minds of youngsters draw the hasty deductions favouring and justifying their unlawful and destructive desires and the parents and the teachers exhibit a sad, almost criminal, indifference and tolerance in respect of the deadly vice. Short of complete purification of the social environment, nothing, in my opinion, will stop the evil. The unconscious and subtle effect of an atmosphere charged with sexuality cannot but react upon the minds of the school-going youth of the country. The surroundings of the city life, the literature, the drama, the cinema, the household appointments, various social ceremonies, do but to point one thing—the promotion of the sexual passion. It is impossible for little children already conscious of the beast

within to resist the pressure exerted by these influences. Palliatives will not answer. The reformation must begin with the elders if they would discharge their trust by the younger generation.

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*9th September, 1926*

## DEFENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

BY M. K. GANDHI

"A reader of 'Young India' writes :

"I am very much pained to read the following sentence in your article on "Curse of Child Marriage" published in the *Young India* of the 26th August 1926: "Only a man innocent of self-restraint and steeped in vice could call it a sin not to marry a girl before she reached the age of monthly period."

"I fail to understand why you could not take a charitable view of those whose opinion differs from you. One can certainly say that the Hindu law giver was entirely wrong in prescribing child marriage. But I think it improper to say that those who insist to child marriage are "steeped in vice". It seems to go beyond the limits of politeness in controversy. In fact this is the first time that I heard such an argument against child marriage. Neither the Hindu social reformers nor the Christian missionaries ever said so, so far as I am aware. Imagine therefore the shock which I received when I found this argument in the writing of Mahatma Gandhi whom I believed to be perfection itself, so far at least as charity towards opponents is concerned.

"You have condemned not one or two but probably every one of the Hindu law-givers. For so far as I know, every Smritikara enjoins early marriage of girls. It is impossible to hold as you have suggested that the passages enjoining early marriage are interpolations. The practice of early marriage is not confined to any province or class of society, but is practically a universal custom in India. It is also a very old practice dating from the time of the Ramayana.

"I shall try to give briefly what I consider might have been the reasons why the Hindu law-givers insisted upon early marriage of girls. They considered it very desirable that every girl should have a husband as a rule. This is necessary no less for the peace of mind and happiness of the girls themselves than for the welfare of the society in general. If every girl has to be provided with a husband the choice of husband should be made by the parents of the girl and not by the girls themselves. If the choice is left to the girls themselves, it will result in many girls not being married at all, not because they do not like marriage but because it is very difficult for all girls to find out suitable husbands. It is also dangerous, for it might lead to flirtation and might cause looseness of morals. Youths who appear to be good might ruin the virtue of simple girls. Again if the choice is to be made by parents, the girls must be married young. When they are grown up, they may fall in love and may not like to marry the bridegroom selected by the parents. When a girl is married young, she becomes one with her husband and his family. The union is more natural and more perfect. It is sometimes difficult for grown up girls with fixed ideas and habits to adapt themselves in a new home.

"The chief objection to early marriage is that it weakens the health of the girl and her children. But this objection is not very convincing for the following reasons. The age of marriage is now rising among the Hindus, but the race is becoming weaker. Fifty or a hundred years ago the men and women were generally stronger, healthier and more long-lived than now. But early marriage was then more in vogue. The physique of educated girls who are married late is not generally better than the girls who receive less education and are married early. From these facts it appears probable that early marriage does not cause as much physical deterioration as some people believe.

"You have good knowledge of both European society and Indian society. You will be able to say whether on the whole Indian wives are more devoted to their husband than European

wives ; whether among the poor people the Indian husbands treat their wives more kindly than European husbands ; whether there are fewer cases of unhappy marriages among Indians than among Europeans ; whether sexual morality is higher in Indian society than in European society. If in these respects the Indian marriages, are more successful than European marriages, then early marriage which is an essential feature of Indian marriages should not be condemned.

"I cannot believe that the Hindu law-givers were actuated by any consideration except the true welfare of society in general (including both the men and women) in laying down the injunction of early marriage of girls. I believe that early marriage of girls is one of the features of Hindu society which have maintained its purity and prevented its disruption in spite of very hostile environments. You may not believe all this. But may we not expect that you should discard your idea that all the great Hindu law-givers who have insisted on early marriage of girls were innocent of self-restraint and were "steeped in vice" ?

"The Madras case reported by you seems to be very peculiar. The jury held that the girl committed suicide. But the girl said that her husband set fire to her clothes. In these conflicting circumstances, it is very difficult to hold that the facts which you consider to be indisputable are really so. There have been millions of cases of girl-wives below 13. Not one case of suicide due to cruel advances of the husband has been heard before. Probably there were peculiar features in the Madras case and early marriage was not the principal cause of the death."

Well does the Poet say : "It costs very little to fashion a suitable philosophy in order to mitigate the rudeness of facts that secretly hurt one's conscience." This "reader of '*Young India*'" has gone a step further, He has not only fashioned a suitable philosophy but ignored facts and erected his argument on unsupported statements.

The charge of want of charity I must pass by, if only

because I have not accused the law-givers but I have ventured to impute vice to those who could insist on marriage at an age too tender for bearing the burden of motherhood. Want of charity comes into being only when you accuse a live person, not an imaginary being, and that too without cause, of impure motives. But is there any warrant for the writer saying that the original authors of the several Smritis who preached self-restraint wrote the verses enjoining marriage of little girls? Is it not more charitable to assume that the Rishis could not be guilty of impurity or gross ignorance of cardinal facts concerning the growth of the human body?

But even if the texts ordering child, as opposed to early (for early marriage means marriage well before 25), marriage be found to be authoritative, we must reject them in the light of positive experience and scientific knowledge. I question the accuracy of the statement that child marriage is universal in Hindu society. I should be sorry to find that 'millions of girls' are married *i.e.*, live as wives whilst they are yet children. The Hindus would have died as a race long ago, if 'millions of girls' had their marriages consummated at say the age of eleven.

Nor does it follow that if the parents are to continue to make the choice of husbands for their daughters, the marriage must be contracted and consummated early. It is still less true to maintain that if girls have to make their choice, there must be courtship and flirtation. After all courtship is not universal in Europe and thousands of Hindu girls are married after fifteen and yet have their husbands selected by their parents. Mussalman parents invariably select husbands for their grown-up daughters. Whether the choice is to be made by girls or their parents is a separate question and is regulated by custom.

The correspondent has tendered no proof to support the statement that children of grown-up wives are weaker than those of child wives. In spite of my experience of both Indian and European society, I must refuse to enter into a comparison

of their morals.- Granting, however, for the sake of argument that morals of European society are lower than those of Hindu society, will it naturally follow that the lowness is due to the marriages taking place after full maturity?

Lastly, the Madras case does not help the correspondent, but his use of it betrays his hasty judgment based upon a total disregard of facts. If he will refer to the article again he will discover that I have drawn my conclusion from proved facts. My conclusion is unaffected by the cause of death. It was proved (1) that the girl was of tender age; (2) that she had no sexual desire; (3) that the 'husband' made cruel advances; (4) that she is no more. It was bad enough if the girl committed suicide, it was worse if the husband murdered her because she could not yield to his inhuman lust. The girl was fit only to learn and play, not to play the wife and carry on her tiny shoulders the weight of house-hold cares or the yoke of a lord and master.

My correspondent is a man occupying high position in society. The nation expects better things from those of her sons and daughters who have received a liberal education and who are expected to think and act in her behalf. We have many abuses in our midst, moral, social, economical, and political. They require patient study, diligent research, delicate handling, accuracy of statement and clear thinking on them and sober impartial judgment. We may then differ, if necessary, as poles asunder. But we shall surely harm the country, our respective religions and the national cause, if we do not toil to discover the truth and adhere to it, cost what it may.

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*16th September, 1926*

## INFLUENCE OF ATTITUDES

BY M. K. GANDHI

"I have been very interested in your articles in *Young India* on the subject of birth control. I expect you have read



J. A. Hadfield's book *Psychology and Morals*. I want to draw your attention to this passage from it.

"We therefore speak of sexual pleasure when the expression of this instinct is alien to our moral sense; and we speak of sexual joy when the expression of this instinct is in conformity with the sentiment of love. Such expression of sex feelings, far from destroying, actually deepen the love of husband and wife; whereas free sexual indulgence, on the one hand, and on the other hand sexual abstinence practised under the false idea that the instinct is but a low pleasure, often produce irritability and the weakening of love;" *i.e.*, he holds that the act of sexual union has a sacramental value in deepening the love between a man and a woman, quite apart from the production of children. If he is right in this—and I am inclined to think he is, for apart from the fact that he is an eminent psychologist, I have myself known of cases in which married life has been distorted and spoiled by attempts to repress the natural desire for physical expression of love, then I wonder how you would justify your doctrine that the only justifiable act of union is that intended for the production of children. For consider this case. A young man and young woman love each other. It is beautiful and part of God's plan that they should so do. But they haven't enough money to support and educate a child. And I suppose you would agree that to bring a child into the world without being able to do these things is sinful; or if you like, say that is bad. for the woman's health to have one, or that she has had too many—anything like that. Now according to you a couple has two alternatives—either they must marry and yet live separately, in which case, if Hadfield is right, their love will tend to be spoiled, because of the irritability produced by repressed desires or they must remain unmarried in which case too their love will be spoiled, for nature gloriously ignores our human institutions. They might, of course, go right away from each other; but even in separation their minds would be active, and so able to develop complexes. And even if you change society so that it is possible for all people to have as many

children as come, there is still the danger to the race of overbreeding, and to the individual woman of excessive child birth. For a man might control himself tremendously and still have a child a year. You must either advocate chastity or birth control, for occasional indulgence may lead—as it has sometimes done amongst English clergymen—to the death of the mother bringing each year into the world the children her husband is pleased to say God sends her.

“What you call self-control is quite as much an interference with nature as contraceptives—more in fact. Men may overindulge their passions through birth control methods—but then they do this without them in all conscience—and at least if they don't produce children by their sin, they alone will suffer for it and not others. Remember the mine-owners will win this present fight because there are too many miners. The too profuse breeders punish not only the poor children they breed but also humanity in general.”

So writes a correspondent. The letter to me is a study in mental attitudes and their influence. Mind takes a rope to be a snake and the man with that mentality turns pale and run-away or takes up a stick to belabour the fancied snake. Another mistakes a sister for wife and has animal passion rising in his breast. The passion subsides, the moment he discovers his mistake. And so in the case quoted by the correspondent. No doubt, whilst ‘abstinence is practiced under the false idea that the instinct is but a low pleasure’, it is likely ‘to produce irritability and the weakening of love’. But if abstinence is practised with the desire to strengthen the bond of love, to purify it and to conserve the vital energy for a better purpose, instead of promoting irritability it will promote equanimity, and instead of loosening the bond of affection strengthen it. Love based upon indulgence of animal passion is at best a selfish affair and likely to snap under the slightest strain. And why should the sexual act be a sacrament in the human species, if it is not that among the lower animals? Why should we not look at it as what it is in reality, *i.e.*, a simple act of procreation to-

which we are helplessly drawn for the perpetuation of the species? Only a man having been gifted with a free will to a limited extent, exercises the human prerogative of self-denial for the sake of the well-being of the species, for the sake of the nobler purpose to which he is born than his brother animals. It is the force of habit which makes us think the sexual act to be necessary and desirable for the promotion of love, apart from procreation, in spite of innumerable experiences to the contrary that it does not deepen love, that it is in no way necessary for its retention or enrichment. Indeed instances can be quoted in which that bond has grown stronger with abstinence. No doubt abstinence must be a voluntary act undertaken for mutual moral advancement.

Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality. If so it must be based on ever increasing restraint upon the demands of the flesh. Thus marriage must be considered to be a sacrament imposing discipline upon the partners restricting them to the physical union only among themselves and for the purpose only of procreation when both the partners desire and are prepared for it. Then in either case supposed by the correspondent, there would be no question of sexual act outside the desire for procreation.

There is an end to all argument if we start, as my correspondent has started, with the premise that sexual act is a necessity outside of the purpose of procreation. The premise is vitiated in the presence of authentic instances that can be cited of complete abstinence having been practised by some of the highest among mankind in all climes. It is no argument against the possibility or desirability of abstinence to say that it is difficult for the vast majority of mankind. What was not possible for the vast majority a hundred years ago has been found possible today. And what is a hundred years in the cycle of time open to us for making infinite progress? If scientists are right it was but yesterday that we found ourselves endowed with the human body. Who knows, who dare prescribe, its limitations? Indeed every day we are discovering the

infiniteness of its capacity for good as well as evil.

If the possibility and desirability of abstinence be admitted, we must find out and devise the means of attaining it. And as I have said in a previous article, life must be remodelled, if we are to live under restraint and discipline. We may not, as the vulgar saying goes, have the cake and eat it. If we would impose restraint upon the organs of procreation, we must impose it upon all the others. If the eye and the ear and the nose and the tongue, the hands and the feet are let loose, it is impossible to keep the primary organ under check. Most cases of irritability, hysteria, and even insanity which are wrongly ascribed to attempts at continence will in truth be found traceable to the incontinence of the other senses. No sin, no breach of nature's laws, goes unpunished.

I must not quarrel about words. If self-control be an interference with nature precisely in the same sense as contraceptives, be it so. I would still maintain that the one interference is lawful and desirable because it promotes the well-being of the individuals as well as society, whereas the other degrades both and therefore unlawful. Self-control is the surest and the only method of regulating the birth-rate. Birth control by contraceptives is race suicide.

Lastly, if the mine-owners are in the wrong and still win, they will do so not because the miners over-breed, but because the miners have not learnt the lesson of restraint all along the line. If miners had no children they would have no incentive for any betterment and they will have no provable cause for a rise in wages. Need they drink, gamble, smoke? Will it be any answer to say that mine-owners do all these things and yet have the upper hand? If the miners do not claim to be better than the capitalist, what right have they to ask for the world's sympathy? Is it to multiply capitalists and strengthen capitalism? We are called upon to pay homage to democracy under the promise of a better world when it reigns supreme. Let us not reproduce on a vast scale the evils we choose to ascribe to capitalists and capitalism.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that self-control is not easily attainable. But its slowness need not ruffle us. Haste is waste. Impatience will not end the evil of excessive birth-rate among the proletariat. Workers among the proletariat have a tremendous task before them. Let them not rule out of their lives the lessons of restraint that the greatest teachers among mankind have handed to us out of the rich stores of their experiences. The fundamental truths they have given us were tested by them in a better laboratory than any equipped under the most up-to-date conditions. The necessity of self-control is the common teaching of them all.

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*11th November, 1926*

### PROSTITUTION OF IDEALS

BY M. K. GANDHI

I extract the following from a letter on the remarriage of child widows:

In your reply to B. Agra, in the *Young India* of September 23, you say that child widows should be remarried by their parents. How can this be done by those parents who perform kanyadan i. e., who give their daughters in marriage according to Shastric injunctions? Surely, it is impossible for parents who have most solemnly and by religious rites renounced all claims on their daughter in favour of their son-in-law, to give her in marriage after his death to another person. She may of her own accord remarry if she will, but since she was given by her parents as a gift or donation (dan) to her husband, no one in the world after the death of her husband has any right to give her in marriage. And for the same reason she herself does not possess any right to remarry. She would, therefore, be faithless and traitress to her dead husband if she remarried without his express consent given at the time of his death.

From a logical point of view, it is thus impossible for a widow—be she child, young or old—who was married according to kanyadan system, which is prevalent amongst most sanatanies, to remarry unless her husband had given her permission to do so. A true sanatani husband cannot however, brook the idea of giving such permission. He will rather fain agree to his wife's becoming sati, if she can or at any rate will like her to spend the rest of her life in devotion to his memory or, which is the same thing, in devotion to God. In this he will solely be actuated by the desire or sense of duty to help the preservation of the high ideals of Hindu marriage and widowhood, which are complimentary to and not independent of each other."

I regard this kind of argument as prostitution of a high ideal. No doubt the correspondent means well but his over-anxiety about purity of women makes him lose sight of elementary justice. What is kanyadan in the case of little children? Has a father any rights of property over his children? He is their protector not owner. And he forfeits the privilege of protection when he abuses it by seeking to barter away the liberty of his ward. Again how can a donation be made to a child who is incapable of receiving a gift? There is no gift where the capacity to receive is lacking. Surely kanyadan is a mystic, religious rite with a spiritual significance. To use such terms in their literal sense, is an abuse of language and religion. One may as well take literally the mystic language of the Puranas and believe in the earth being a flat dish sustained on the hood of a thousand-headed snake and Divinity lying in soft ease on an ocean of milk for his bed.

The least that a parent, who has so abused his trust as to give in marriage an infant to an old man in his dotage or to a boy hardly out of his teens, can do, is to purge himself of his sin by remarrying the daughter when she becomes widowed. As I have said in a previous note such marriages should be declared null and void from the beginning.

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*26th November, 1925*

## INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY M. K. GANDHI

The departure of C. F. Andrews for South Africa, the impending departure of the Government of India deputation and the impending arrival of a deputation to India headed by Dr. Abdur Rahman makes the South African question the question of the hour. For the Indian settlers it is a question of life and death. The Union Government seems to be determined to put an end to Indian existence in South Africa not by straight forward means of forcible expulsion but by the dishonest process of squeezing. The proposed legislation practically deprives them of all the honourable avenues of earning and by so doing it seeks to deprive them of every shred of self-respect. The Union Government will cease to be troubled about the Indian question when they have ceased to be troubled by the presence in their midst of self-respecting and independent Indians and have to deal only with labourers, waiters, cooks and the like. They want a few servants, they do not want equals fellow farmers or fellow traders.

The answer therefore returned by the Union Government to the Indian deputation that waited on them is not surprising. They have avowed their determination to proceed with the proposed legislation. They will only consider 'constructive suggestions' in details. They have not made up their minds about a round table conference.

I expect a great deal from Mr. Andrews' presence in South Africa if the settlers show firmness and cohesion among themselves. The Government of India deputation can do much if they have instructions not to yield on fundamentals. No repatriation and no curtailment, at the very least, of rights existing at the time of the settlement of 1914. The proposed legislation is a deprivation of these rights.

Any one who knows anything of the condition of South Africa knows that there is no real active opposition on the part

of the mass of the European population to the presence of the Indian settlers. If there was, the overwhelmingly large European population would without legislative aid make it impossible for the Indian settler to remain in South Africa. Nor is the original population of South Africa hostile to the settlers. It is because the general European and Native population is not only not ill-disposed towards the Indian settler but willingly and freely deals with him that he can at all live there. The proposed legislation is an attempt to interfere with the free mercantile intercourse between Europeans and Natives on the one hand and Indians on the other. If, therefore, the Government of India take up a firm attitude the Union Government's case must fall to pieces. The legitimate fear of being swamped by India's millions having been removed in 1914 the Union Government were in honour bound to grant and guarantee to the resident Indian population full rights of inter-migration, trade and ownership of land. The present is an attempt to go back upon the understanding. I reproduce elsewhere the correspondence embodying the agreement of 1914, for the guidance of the reader.

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*26th November, 1926*

#### THE AGREEMENT OF 1914

The following is the correspondence between the Union Government and Mr. Gandhi referred to in to-day's leading article:

Department of the Interior,  
Capetown, Cape of Good Hope,  
30th June, 1924

Dear Mr. Gandhi,—Adverting to the discussions you have lately had with General Smuts on the subject of the position of the Indian community in the Union, at the first of which you expressed yourself as satisfied with the provisions of the Indian's



Relief Bill and accepted it as a definite settlement of the points, which required legislative action, at issue between that community and the Government: and at the second of which you submitted for the consideration of the Government a list of other matters requiring administrative action, over and above those specifically dealt with in that Bill; I am desired by General Smuts to state with reference to those matters that:

1. He sees no difficulty in arranging that the Protector of the Indian Immigrants in Natal will in future issue to every Indian, who is subject to the provisions of Natal Act 17 of 1895, on completion of his period of indenture, or re-indenture, a certificate of discharge, free of charge, similar in form to that issued under the provisions of Section 106 of Natal Law No. 25 of 1891.

2. On the question of allowing existing plural wives and the children of such wives to join their husbands (or fathers) in South Africa, no difficulty will be raised by the Government if on enquiry, it is found, as you stated, that the number is a very limited one.

3. In administering the provisions of Section (4) (1) (a) of the Union Immigrants' Regulation Act, No. 22 of 1913, the practice hitherto existing at the Cape will be continued in respect of South African born Indians who seek to enter the Cape Province, so long as the movement of such persons to that Province assumes no greater dimensions than has been the case in the past; the Government, however, reserve the right, as soon as the number of such entrants sensibly increase, to apply the provisions of the Immigration Act.

4. In the case of the "specially exempted educated entrants into the Union" (i. e., the limited number who will be allowed by the Government to enter the Union each year for some purpose connected with the general welfare of the Indian community), the declarations to be made by such persons will not be required at Provincial borders, as the general declarations which are made in terms of Section 19 of the Immigrants' Regulation Act at the port of entry are sufficient.

5. Those Indians who have been admitted within the last three years, either to the Cape Province or Natal, after passing the education tests imposed by the Immigration Laws which were in force therein prior to the coming into effect of Act 22 of 1913, but who, by reason of the wording of Section 30 thereof, are not yet regarded as being 'domiciled' in the sense in which that term is defined in the Section in question, shall, in the event of their absenting themselves temporarily from the Province in which they are lawfully resident, be treated, on their return, as if the term 'domicile' as so defined did apply to them.

6. He will submit to the Minister of Justice the cases of those persons who have been in the past convicted of "*bona fide* passive resistance offences" (a term which is mutually understood) and that he anticipates no objection on Mr. De Wet's part to the suggestion that convictions for such offences will not be used by the Government against such persons in future.

7. A document will be issued to every "specially exempted educated entrant" who is passed by the Immigration Officers under the instructions of the Minister issued under Section 25 of Act No. 22 of 1913.

8. All the recommendations of the Indian Grievances Commission enumerated at the conclusion of their Report, which remain over and above the points dealt with in the Indian Relief Bill, will be adopted by the Government; and subject to the stipulation contained in the last paragraph of this letter the necessary further action in regard to those matters will be issued without delay.

With regard to the administration of existing laws, the Minister desires me to say that it always has been and will continue to be the desire of the Government to see that they are administered in a just manner and with a due regard to vested rights.

In conclusion, General Smuts desires me to say that it is, of course, understood, and he wishes no doubts on the subject.

to remain, that the placing of the Indians' Relief Bill on the Statute Book of the Union, coupled with the fulfilment of the assurances he is giving in this letter in regard to other matters referred to herein, touched upon at the recent interviews, will constitute a complete and final settlement of the controversy which has unfortunately existed for so long, and will be unreservedly accepted as such by the Indian community.

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,  
7, Buitencingel,  
Cape Town.

I am, etc.,  
(Sd.) E. M. GORGES

7, Buitencingel,  
Cape Town,  
30th June, 1914.

Dear Mr. Gorges,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of even date herewith setting forth the substance of the interview that General Smuts was pleased, notwithstanding many other pressing calls upon his time, to grant me on Saturday last. I feel deeply grateful for the patience and courtesy which the Minister showed during the discussion of the several points submitted by me.

The passing of the Indians' Relief Bill and this correspondence finally closed the Passive Resistance struggle which commenced in the September of 1906 and which to the Indian community cost much physical suffering and pecuniary loss and to the Government much anxious thought and consideration.

As the Minister is aware, some of my countrymen have wished me to go further. They are dissatisfied that the trade licenses laws of the different Provinces, the Transvaal Gold Law, the Transvaal Townships Act, the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885 have not been altered so as to give them full rights of residence, trade and ownership of land. Some of them are dissatisfied that full inter-provincial migration is not permitted, and some are dissatisfied that on the marriage question the

Relief Bill goes no further than it does. They have asked me that all the above matters might be included in the Passive Resistance struggle. I have been unable to comply with their wishes. Whilst, therefore, they have not been included in the programme of Passive Resistance, it will not be denied that some day or other these matters will require further and sympathetic consideration by the Government. Complete satisfaction cannot be expected until full civic rights have been conceded to the resident Indian population.

I have told my countrymen that they will have to exercise patience and by all honourable means at their disposal educate public opinion so as to enable the Government of the day to go further than the present correspondence does. I shall hope that when the Europeans of South Africa fully appreciate the fact that now, as the importation of indentured labour from India is prohibited and as the Immigrants' Regulation Act of last year has in practice all but stopped further free Indian immigration and that my countrymen do not aspire to any political ambition, they, the Europeans, will see the justice and indeed the necessity of my countrymen being granted the rights I have just referred to.

Meanwhile, if the generous spirit that the Government have applied to the treatment of the problem during the past few months continues to be applied, as promised in your letter, in the administration of the existing laws, I am quite certain that the Indian community throughout the Union will be able to enjoy some measure of peace and never be a source of trouble to the Government.

E. M. Gorges, Esq.,  
Department of the Interior,  
Cape Town.

I am,  
Yours faithfully,  
(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI

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*24th December, 1925*

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUZZLE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The more one reads the papers brought with them by the Indian deputation from South Africa, the more insoluble the puzzle appears to be. Dr. Malan thinks that his proposed Bill does not constitute any violation of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914. Mr. James Godfrey who led the deputation that waited on him, and who is now in India as one of the members of the deputation successfully combated the view. Now that agreement finally closed all the questions that were the subject matter of Satyagraha or Passive Resistance as it was known at the time. That struggle was intended to close once for all the door against legislation based upon racial or colour distinctions. That central fact was brought out not once but again and again during the six years that the struggle lasted. A time was reached when both the late General Botha and General Smuts were ready to concede almost every material point, provided what they called the sentimental objection against race distinction was waived by the Indian community. From that time *i.e.* from 1908 the struggle chiefly centred round that one "sentimental" objection and General Botha had declared that on that point no South African Government could yield an inch; and he said that in further prosecuting the struggle the Indian community would be "kicking against pricks." Surely then it was the essence of the agreement that no race distinction should be made in any legislation affecting the Indian community. Dr. Malan's Bill on the other hand breathes through every line of it the racial spirit.

In my humble opinion, therefore, the Bill is a clear breach of that agreement in this respect. Moreover, the struggle was one against the imposition of further disabilities upon Indians. The Settlement was to be an augury of a better future for the Indian community. It is so stated in the correspondence. What could be the meaning of the Settlement? Where was any

security for the Indian residents against further encroachments upon their status, if new restrictions could be imposed at the sweet will of the Government of the day? Let there be no mistake that the settlement was wrung from an unwilling Government after eight years' hard and prolonged struggle involving sufferings of thousands of Indians and death of a good few. What could be the value of a Settlement which closes matters in dispute only to re-open them the very next day? Were the existing laws to be administered with punctilious regard for existing rights, only to attack the latter with new laws? Yet such is the meaning of Dr. Malan's contention and interpretation of the agreement. There is, however, some consolation even in the Minister's tragic contention in that he does not repudiate the Settlement, but says that his Bill is not in breach of it. One would therefore suppose that if it could be proved that the Bill was in breach of the agreement it would have to go.

What then is to be done when parties to an agreement differ as to its interpretation? Everybody knows the usual remedy, but let me quote two South African precedents. There were about the year 1893 certain matters in dispute between the Government of the South African (Transvaal) Republic and the British Government regarding the status of British Indian settlers in the Transvaal. Among these was the question of interpretation of Law III of 1885. All these matters were referred to arbitration by mutual consent, and Chief Justice Melins de Villiers of the then Orange Free State was appointed sole arbitrator. The second precedent is a question of interpretation of the Treaty of Vereenigen between the Transvaal Government represented by General Botha and the British Government. I think it was the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman who laid down that the interpretation that the weaker party *i. e.* the Transvaal Government put upon the treaty should be accepted and without arbitration and without further ado General Botha's interpretation was accepted as against Lord Kitchener's by the British Government. Will Dr. Malan follow either precedent, or will he say after the style of

the giant in the story of the giant and the dwarf that his contention must be always right? Any way the Indian Deputation has a strong case for arbitration, seeing that Dr. Malan accepts the settlement of 1914.

In their able statements for the Viceroy they have made out an overwhelming case. Perhaps naturally they have not discussed the disabilities enumerated there in terms of the Settlement of 1914, having been summarily told by Dr. Malan that his proposed legislation is not in breach of the agreement. But it is a case not to be easily abandoned. Theirs is undoubtedly a difficult task. Here is a stubborn Government determined upon going on with its highly racial legislation. All European parties seem to be in agreement on this one question. General Smuts, Mr. Andrews tells us, has thrown his weight on the Government side. It does not surprise me because he has always chosen to sail with the wind. No statesman has perhaps shown so much contempt for past promises and declarations as General Smuts, —a trait in him which has earned for him the title of 'Slim Janny.' But right is clearly on the Indian side and if they have also a fixed determination not to yield an inch of ground on matters of principle, they must win.

Dr. Malan wanted James Godfrey to accept the principle of the measure, and to discuss matters of detail, to make, what he was pleased to call, constructive proposals. I am glad to note that he resolutely declined to fall into the trap. The Deputation will have all the aid that India, weak as she is, can give them. They will have the support of all the parties. Let them take heart and fight on.

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*18th February, 1926*

## THE TOPIC OF THE HOUR

BY M. K. GANDHI

By the time this is before the public the majority of the South African deputation will be on the waters on their way

back to South Africa. Before sailing Messrs Amod Bhayat, James Godfrey, Pather and Mirza paid me a visit and discussed the situation as it is developing from day to day. They expressed themselves satisfied with the splendid welcome extended to them wherever they went and the support received from all parties in India not excluding European Associations. But they were not, I am glad to say, deceived into any false sense of security by the support. They realised that India was willing but not equally able to help.

The Colour Bar Bill is making steady progress. On principle it is just as bad as the Asiatic measure and therefore just as open to objection as the latter. Its progress evidences the Union Government's intention and determination about the Asiatic Bill. It is becoming daily clearer that the Union Government intend if possible to stiffen the measure rather than relax it. The proposed amendment of section 10 gives no relief worth the name and the inclusion of the Cape has roused against the Bill even a section of the South African press so much that one paper goes so far as to insinuate that it is probably out of spite against Dr. Abdur Rahman's doings in India that the S.A. Government seek to include the Cape in the scope of the Bill. Let us hope that whatever else that Government may be guilty of, it is not guilty of the littleness ascribed to it. Be that as it may, there is no doubt about the mind of that Government. It is this root and branch policy that the Indian settlers have to face and combat. They can do so successfully, if they have a strong backing from the Imperial and the Indian Governments. This they will not have. The Indian Government is a shadow of the Imperial. The latter is neither feared nor respected by the present Union Government. On the contrary it fears the Union Government lest South Africa may secede from the Imperial partnership. It is the case of the tail wagging the dog. The Imperial Government would never assert itself against South Africa unless there was fear of losing India. The apparent collapse of non-co-operation has given the Imperial Government a new hope about India's helplessness. At the crucial



moment therefore the weight of authority will be thrown on the side of South Africa unless the unexpected happens this side of the Indian Ocean. The ultimate passing of the bill, even though it may be postponed for the present session, is thus assured.

What are then our countrymen in South Africa to do? There is nothing in the world like self-help. The world helps those who help themselves. Self-help in this case, as perhaps in every other, means self-suffering, self-suffering means Satyagraha. When their honour is at stake, when their rights are being taken away, when their livelihood is threatened, they have the right and it becomes their duty to offer Satyagraha. They offered it during 1907 and 1914 and won the support even of the Government of India indeed the recognition of the Europeans and the Government of South Africa. They can do likewise again if they have the will and the courage to suffer for the common good.

That time is not yet. They must, as they are doing, exhaust every diplomatic remedy. They must await the result of the negotiations the Government of India are carrying on with the Union Government. And when they have explored and tried every other available channel and failed to find a way out, the case for Satyagraha is complete. Then it would be cowardice to flinch. And victory is a certainty. No power on earth can make a person do a thing against his will. Satyagraha is a direct result of the recognition of this great Law and is independent of numbers participating in it.

Terms of Satyagraha are imperative, admitting of no exception. There should be no violence in any shape or form. There must be an irreducible minimum—a minimum that would commend itself to any reasonable and impartial judge. We may be justly entitled to many things but Satyagraha is offered for things without which self respect, or which is the same thing, honourable existence, is impossible.

They must count the cost. Satyagraha cannot be offered in bravado or as a mere trial. It is a measure of the depth of one's feeling. It is therefore offered because it becomes irresisti-

ble. No price is too dear to pay for it i.e. truth. Success comes when it is least expected. It is undertaken not from a belief in human aid but it is based upon an unquenchable faith in God and His justice. And God is both gentle and hard. He tries us through and through to the last suffering point but He is so gentle as never to test us to the breaking point.

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*18th March, 1926*

### DIFFERENCE IN DEGREE

BY M. K. GANDHI

The office-bearers of the Glasgow Indian Union have circulated a letter bringing to light the disabilities that have been imposed upon certain Indian residents in Glasgow. I take the following from the letter:

“The Home Secretary on 18th March, 1925, issued the order, a copy of which is enclosed, directing the registration of ‘Alien Seamen.’ This order has been made applicable to Glasgow and District in January of this year and the Police Authorities here acting under the instructions of the Home Office have arbitrarily registered as Aliens the individuals whose names and addresses are given in the accompanying list. These individuals have all been in this country for periods of from three to fourteen years: they were born in India—majority in the Punjab—and are British subjects. Many of them were employed here during the War and are still employed as labourers, others as pedlars and in isolated cases as seamen. They have all been quite peaceful and law-abiding citizens. It is the intention of the Home Secretary to register these men as ‘Alien Seamen’ which they certainly are not, and it is very significant that in the identity books that have been issued to them their nationality and birth-place are left blank. We, Indians, consider that this action of the Home Office is the culmination of a

general policy of systematic exclusion of Indians, which has developed in recent years. All Indians have, on the ground of their nationality, been refused admission to certain Picture Houses and some other places of entertainment in Glasgow, "the most liberal city in Scotland"—an eloquent evidence of the gratitude of the people of this country for signal services rendered by Indians during Britain's time of greatest affliction and crisis recorded in the annals of History."

Attached to the letter is the text of the order issued over the signature of the Home Secretary. It is called special restriction of "Coloured Alien Seamen" order. The order refers to 63 men. All of them are Mussalmans with the possible-exception of one name which reads like a Hindu name. The majority of them are described as pedlars; only two are described as seamen. The districts to which they belong are Mirpur and Jullunder principally. All without exception belong to the Punjab. Why these men should be called coloured and not Asiatic, it is difficult to guess. It is still more difficult to say why they are considered as aliens when they are manifestly British subjects.

The treatment itself that this registration implies, it is not difficult to understand. It is the same thing as in South Africa. The only difference is in degree and I doubt not that if a much larger number of Indians settle in the British Isles there will be a panic which will be followed by legislation. Not very long ago one read in the papers that Chinese washermen were almost lynched in Liverpool. Things are no better in America. I printed only the other day on the subject a letter from an Indian student in that Continent. I had recently a visit from an America-returned student. He is a cultured man speaking faultless English, having subdued manners. He gave me a painful picture of American prejudice against colour and left on me the impression that it was on the increase. The question therefore that is agitating South Africa is not a local one but it is a tremendous world problem. Whilst Asiatic races are held under subjection and are indifferent to their own welfare, it is easy enough to treat them as they are being treated, whether in England or in

America or in Africa ; for that matter in their own homes as in China and in India. But they will not long remain asleep. One can but hope therefore that their awakening may not lead to making confusion worse confounded and adding to the racial bitterness already existing. There is, however, no hope of avoiding the catastrophe unless the spirit of exploitation that at present dominates the nations of the West is transmuted into that of real helpful service or unless the Asiatic and the African races understand that they cannot be exploited without their co-operation, to a large extent voluntary, and thus understanding withdraw such co-operation. Take the present instance itself. These brave Punjabis need not put up with the insult of submission to the racial discrimination which is sought to be imposed upon them. They need not stay where they are unwelcome visitors, or if they must stay, they need not submit to humiliating treatment and they should suffer the consequence of disobedience in the shape of imprisonment. It is often found that those against whom discrimination is made are in some measure, be it ever so slight, responsible for it. If such is the case with the Punjabis, they should remove every such excuse so that their cause may be found to be above reproach. If man, no matter what pigment he wears, will realise his status, he will discover that it is possible for him to stand erect even before a whole world in opposition.

In passing I would like to draw the attention of the framers of the general letter from which I have quoted, that whilst it is brief and otherwise admirable, it jars by reason of the emphasis laid by the writers upon "signal services rendered by Indians during Britain's time of greatest affliction and crisis recorded in the annals of History." If India rendered willing service at the time of the War, its value is diminished by demanding gratitude for it was rendered as a duty and duty will be merit when debt becomes a donation." The fact however is that the service was not willingly rendered. Force on the threat of it was a potent consideration that prompted it. It is the prudential restraint of Englishmen that they do not every time, on mention of these

services, retort that we rendered them as *begar* even as when officials on tour in the Indian villages impress labour. The people who were forced out of their homes in the Punjab to serve at the time of the War have little cause to be proud of their service, still less to evoke the gratitude of the British Government. The gratitude went to Sir Michael O'Dwyer who demanded and got his quota of recruits, cost what it might, from every district of the Punjab.

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*29th April, 1926*

### SOUTH AFRICA

BY M. K. GANDHI

The Government of India has every reason to congratulate itself upon the diplomatic victory it has gained in South Africa. I have shown elsewhere that nothing could have been done in South Africa but for the extraordinary faith and labours of C. F. Andrews. Never-the-less had the Government of India been at all remiss in its prosecution of the Indian claim, the Areas Reservation Bill would certainly have been passed by the Union Parliament. It is a great gain that the Bill has been postponed and a conference agreed upon.

But there is a fly in the ointment. The Union Government's condition and its acceptance by the Government of India that the resolution must 'safeguard Western standards of life by just and legitimate means' may make an equitable solution impossible. What is the meaning of 'safe-guarding Western standards of life' or of 'just and legitimate means'? The safe-guard may mean, for instance, that the indentured Indian working on the plantations and getting perhaps 30 shillings per month should live like the European artisan in a five-roomed brick-built cottage and wear the European costume from top to toe and eat European food; and 'just and legitimate means' may be compulsory deportation of those indentur-

ed Indians who do not conform to the impossible safe-guard ; or, 'safe-guarding by just and legitimate means' may mean reasonable sanitary and economic laws of common applicability ensuring on the part of all a standard of life in keeping with sanitary and hygienic requirements and regulation of all business in conformity to the European standard. Indians would have and should have no objection to the latter interpretation. Never have objections been raised to general sanitary or economic requirements.

But the correspondence just published enables me to understand what the Union Government will want. That Government wants repatriation, not reformation. It would not be party to the holding of a conference if the Government of India would not consent to that question being favourably considered at the Conference. Lord Reading cleverly got out of the difficulty by saying he had no objection to voluntary repatriation as limited by the Indian Relief Act being discussed. The Union Government could not very well insist upon the precise terms of repatriation being previously accepted. They therefore discovered the new formula of conformity to 'Western standards of life'. On the face of it, the condition is harmless enough. But it can be made to cover, as I have shewn, impossibilities. Much will therefore depend upon what mentalities both parties bring to the conference and what strength the Government of India shows. Hitherto it has surrendered the Indian claim every time there has been a tussle and has claimed it as a virtue that it has not yielded all the Union Government has aimed at. This is as much as to say that the judge in a cause did not permit the thief to retain all he had stolen. It must never be forgotten that every time the South African Government has admittedly without just cause sought to deprive the Indian settler of his just rights as a peaceful citizen of South Africa. The Government of India to be true to its trust should therefore have been able to show a record at each tussle of recovery of lost ground. The fact however is that had not the settlers in 1906 taken the

law, as it were, into their own hands, they would have lost all, the Government of India being privy to it. For the Indian and the Imperial Governments had already consented in 1907 to the brutal Asiatic Act—the same that was in 1906 vetoed by Lord Elgin, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Though, therefore, the postponement of the Bill and the Conference is a tremendous step gained in the present campaign, if the Government of India weaken in the final heat, the present advantage will be counted as a wasted effort.

The public has thus as great need to be watchful as ever if the advantage is not to be lost. The breathing time must be fully utilised for a close study of the problem and for elucidating the fact that the only crime provable against the Indian settler is his Asiatic birth and the possession of a coloured pigment. It is statutory crime. For, the South African constitution in effect says 'there shall be no equality between whites on the one hand, and coloured and Asiatic races on the other.' South Africa believes as much in hereditary caste as we do in India.

Lastly, I must not omit to reiterate the opinion given in these columns that the salvation of the settlers lies finally in their own hands. The Government of India, public opinion, and even the Union Government and the white people of South Africa will help them if they will help themselves. Let them remove the slightest cause of complaint against them whether on grounds of hygiene or economics. In all things not immoral let them do 'in Rome as the Romans do'. Let them be and remain absolutely united. And above all let them be resolute in suffering for the common good.

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## INDIANS IN AUSTRALIA

An Indian settler of Australia says in the course of a letter:

"We can't get work of any kind here in Australia. We are charged the same rates as British. We can't get a rebate on our rates as the latter, but have to pay our full share no matter how. We try to get work; the answer is: 'No work for black people.' Only Australians or other white races employed. Even our own little block of land we have to put in another man's name to hold for us as 'trustee.' If he is honest it is all right. If otherwise, well, good-bye to your land as it is all Miners' Rights in this part of the country. They say all people get the same fair treatment. Not we poor Indians. We can starve here before the British will give us a regular job or wages no matter how clever you are in any trade. You may be the best engineer in Australia but you are no better. No work for coloured people.

When Mr. Sastri came to Australia, he was only shown the show part got up for the occasion. They never told him the hardships we had to put up with. He took with him the impression that everything was all right. The few people he met in Perth City were mostly Beer Bottle collectors and a few cooks among them. He did not see the real hard-working class, camel and donkey teams away out back in a blazing hot country two or three days without water. No, he never came inland. So how was he able to speak for all the people? He went away taking a wrong impression of us Indians here in Out-Back district. If we did not grow a few vegetables and hawk them, we would die of starvation, as we cannot get any help at all from the Australians."

The correspondent sends too the original letter received by him in reply to his mining application from the Registrar, Mines Department, which I copy below:

"With reference to your letter of the 31st ultimo, I would advise you that we are unable to issue Miners' Rights to persons of Indian race."

This letter is an eye-opener. It was thought that in



Australia there was no racial discrimination against those Asiatics who had settled there. But the correspondent's letter, fortified as it is with an original letter from the Mines Department, leaves no room for doubt.—20th May, 1926.

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*24th June, 1926*

### A TRAVESTY

'The Voluntary repatriation' described by Dr. Malan, the Union Minister is anything but voluntary. It is stimulated, aided or induced. And if the process continues unchecked, it may presently become compulsory. A large number of men repatriated are said to be colonial-born. No colonial-born Indian to whom India is only a geographical expression will voluntarily repatriate himself. Again it is not voluntary repatriation when an agency is set up, probably paid by results, to collect repatriation recruits and when these recruits are detained in compounds pending repatriation. It seems to me that this detention in compounds is likely to be declared illegal if it is tested in a court of law. For detention without a guard would be useless. And placing a guard over free and innocent men would amount to wrongful confinement. I know of no regulation in 1914 that permitted the Government to detain such men in guarded camps. If repatriation is to be voluntary it must be free from the pestering attention of recruiting agents and there should be no detention in depots or camps.

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*25th November, 1926*

### A DAY OF PRAYER

BY M. K. GANDHI

C. F. Andrews has sent me the following characteristic cablegram:

"Executive decided observe December nineteenth day prayer forthcoming Conference. Churches co-operating.

After widest consulting best European sentiment feel step likely much appreciated. Advice Sarojini."

He is an intensely godly man and therefore a man of prayer. His politics are guided, coloured and ennobled by his prayer. Prayer with him is no empty formula. It is with him intense and incessant communion with God and waiting upon Him for guidance in his daily work great and small. No work that is done in his name and dedicated to him is small. All work when so done assumes equal merit. A scavenger who works in His service shares equal distinction with a king who uses his gifts in His name and as a mere trustee. Unlike as among us very imperfect beings, in His Durbar the motive rather than the act itself decides its quality. We infer the intention from the act. He, knowing the intention as much as the act, judges the act according to the intention.

And Andrews, because his intentions are the purest possible, believes that God will ensure his success. He has every reason for his belief. For he has hitherto succeeded where others have failed. No one knows the history of Andrews' many unseen services. Those the public see are by no means the most significant or fruitful, not to mention contemporary events—Who knows, for instance, how he influenced the many beneficial decisions of Lord Hardinge? Truly with him, his 'left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth.'

This good man has made his own this South African matter, to which he was first appointed by Gokhale. He thinks and prays about it intensely. He had prepared me by a previous letter for the cable I have given to the public. He has infected the Indians with his belief in prayer. I know them all and I must own that many have accepted his advice purely as a matter of form or to please him or to make political capital out of the event. But I know that there are some who have endorsed his proposition with absolute sincerity. The sincerity of the few will cover the insincerity or the indifference of the many.

The Dutch element of South Africa is religious according

to its own lights. In South Africa therefore, in times of famines or locust visitations there are days officially appointed for humiliation and prayer. It is then no wonder that Andrews has found the best European sentiment ranging itself round a proposal which has its seat not in his brain but in his heart. But he is not easily satisfied. He wants an adequate response from India and her public bodies. He wants no resolutions, he does not ask for money, he wants a melting of our hearts. He wants us, if we will, to look God-ward. He wants us to seek help from God.

Andrews have become an Indian because he is an Englishman. He wants to rule not by force but by love. And love ever indentifies itself with the loved one. He believes that the reputation of European humanity is at stake in South Africa. So much tribulation has been suffered in South Africa that in his opinion the future of the relations between Asiatic and coloured races and the European will largely depend upon the deliberations of the forthcoming Conference which is mainly a result of his efforts. He wants divine blessings on these deliberations and asks our co-operation invoking them. Let no one ask what is prayer and where and who is God. Both prayer and belief in God are supremely acts of faith. Let those therefore who have that faith respond to the appeal of this English Indian.

Prayer is a result of realisation of our helplessness and our final reliance upon God to the exclusion of all else. We are surely conscious of our helplessness. On the eve of his departure the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivas Sastri has called the Indian cause which he is going to espouse a 'desperate cause.' Let us then pray on the 19th if we have faith in God. All Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis, Jews, and others can join if they will. Though we may know Him by a thousand names. He is one and the same to us all.

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*16th December, 1926*

## SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

BY M. K. GANDHI

Mr. Andrews cables as follows from Pretoria?

"Prayer day endorsed by Dutch Church nineteenth. Hertzog receives delegates seventeenth. Then retires. First session twentieth."

The endorsement of the prayer day by the Dutch reformed Church is a great step towards securing an atmosphere favouring a just solution of the difficult question. The Dutch Church is a most conservative body in South Africa. It has rarely taken a broad view of the Indian or the general colour question as it is called in South Africa. The reception that is to take place on the seventeenth by General Hertzog of the delegates to the Conference is a step in recognition of the tremendous importance of the Conference and of the issues that are to be discussed by the Conference.

I hope that the Indian public will back wholeheartedly the noble effort of this single-minded Englishman. One may thoughtlessly say that it costs nothing to offer prayers and that the pressmen will announce that prayers were offered for the success of the mission at so many places. But in reality, it is a most difficult thing that Mr. Andrews has asked us to do. One can give of one's possessions willingly or unwillingly or even for a show. One may give unwilling intellectual assent to a proposition. But there is no such thing as unwilling or showy heart co-operation. And what Mr. Andrews wants is heart co-operation, for prayer is nothing else but an intense longing of the heart. You may express yourself through the lips; you may express yourself in the private closet or in public; but to be genuine, the expression must come from the the deepest recesses of the heart. Let those who can, that is those who believe in the cause of the Indians of South Africa and who believe in God and therefore in prayer, set apart some

time on the nineteenth instant for the heart co-operation with the Indian settlers of South Africa and invoke God's blessings on the deliberations of the Conference.

If there is anybody in India who still does not know what the Indian cause in South Africa is, let him or her understand that the very existence of the Indians in South Africa is at stake. Specifically, the Asiatic Bill that was suspended during the last session of the Union Parliament and which will be subject matter of discussion is a bill which is so designed as to make it impossible for any self-respecting Indian to remain in South Africa. Let those who do not know the legal position of Indians in South Africa realise that they have practically no political status whatsoever within the Union. They have no rights even of residence in Orangia except as domestic servants. In many parts they cannot become owners of landed property. Throughout South Africa, the trading rights have been considerably curtailed and the administration of the existing legislation regarding trading rights is becoming more and more severe against Indian traders, even against those who are holders of trading licenses of long standing. I say nothing about the social barriers that have been erected against them and consequent difficulties about freedom of travelling etc. They have hardly any facility for the education of their children worth the name. The position therefore, it will be seen, is precarious enough as it is. The Asiatic Bill if it is passed will put the finishing touch. The Conference has been brought about after tremendous difficulties to ease the situation and to secure the barest justice for the Indian settler. And it is on this effort that C. F. Andrews seeks to invoke the blessing of God on the nineteenth instant. Let those who believe, in all humility, tender their heart co-operation.

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## SOME OBITER DICTA

*Free Trade v. Protection*:—A *propose* of the contemplated protection for Tata Steel Works, I have been asked to state my own views on protection. Of what use they can possibly be, at the present moment, I do not know; nor do I know the merits of the proposal regarding the Steel Works. But I take the opportunity of dispelling the illusion that I am inimical to capital and that I would destroy machinery and their products if I had the power. The fact is that I am a confirmed protectionist. Free trade may be good for England which dumps down her manufactures among helpless people and wishes her wants to be supplied from outside at the cheapest rate. But free trade has ruined India's peasantry in that it has all but destroyed her cottage industry. Moreover no new trade can compete with foreign trade without protection. Natal nursed her sugar industry by both bounty and import duty. Germany developed beet sugar by a system of bounties. I would any day welcome protection for mill industry, although I give and would always give preference to hand-spun Khaddar. Indeed I would give protection to all useful industries. Much of my opposition to the Government would abate, if I found that it was truly solicitous for India's economic and moral welfare. Let the Government protect the cloth industry to the point of prohibition of all foreign cloth, let it popularise the charkha by making all its purchases of cloth in Khaddar, let it abolish without regard to revenue the drink and the drug traffic, and cut down the army expenditure to the extent of the loss of that revenue. When such a happy event takes place, my opposition will lose its point. It will have the way for a real discussion of Reforms. To me the two steps will be a striking sign of change of heart which must precede any honourable settlement

—15th May, 1924

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*Ja-men v. Amen*:—A friend writes, "I thank you for having given a clear-cut programme for the future. I know it is the old programme you reaffirm. But it seems new and startling, because we have erred from the right path. In Danish we have a saying *Ja-men* which means 'yes, but—' as against *Amen* which means simply 'yes.' Most of us seem to believe in *Ja-men*. 'Yes, we promised to boycott Government institutions and not serve our oppressors; but how can we do without them?' we seem to say. These 'buts' are an invention of the devil."

Unfortunately, the last-named gentleman is always with us. He panders to our weaknesses, works upon us through them and charms us into his delusive snares. National workers will have to get out of his clutches and burn all the 'buts.' They may say 'yes' to the boycotts, if they mean 'yes' without any reservation. Even if believing in the boycotts they cannot say 'yes' through their weakness, they should make the confession openly. It would do them and the country a world of good.—26th June, 1924

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*Ignorance*:—A friend sends me for answer a 'Guardian' cutting wherein a retired Indian police officer has succeeded in airing his general ignorance of things Indian. It is so difficult to overtake newspaper paragraphs and correct them. A movement to succeed has to pass through the stage of ridicule and ignorance. But I may say categorically that the non-cooperation movement is nothing if it is not constructive. Its Khaddar work, its efforts (it does not matter that they appear to be unsuccessful at present), its work among and for the untouchables, its national schools, its attempt to found panchayats, its propaganda against drink and opium, its relief of distress due to famines and floods are all examples of constructive work. The movement does not seek to establish Hindu Raj by the 'grace of British Raj, but it seeks to establish Swaraj, meaning the Government by the chosen representative of the people in the

place of the British Raj (i. e.) government by British or Indian administrators utterly irresponsible to the people and appointed in the interest of the exploitation of India and her people. Full and frank expiation has always been made for every mistake made in the course of the struggle. No movement on such a large scale has been so free from violence as the non-co-operation movement. Compare the Indian to every other contemporary national movement and the list of murders and other violence committed in the name of patriotism. The writer brings up for commendation the Christian work among the untouchables. I must not enter into the merits of Christian work in India. The indirect influence of Christianity has been to quicken Hinduism into life. The cultured Hindu society has admitted its grievous sin against the untouchables. But the effect of Christianity upon India in general must be judged by the life lived in our midst by the average Christian and its effect upon us. I am sorry to have to record my opinion that it has been disastrous. It pains me to have to say that the Christian missionaries as a body with honourable exceptions have actively supported a system, which has impoverished, enervated and demoralised a people considered to be among the gentlest and the most civilised on earth. Lastly, I do not share the belief that there can or will be on earth one religion. I am striving therefore to find a common factor and to induce mutual tolerance.—31st July, 1924

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*Change of Heart*:—Here is a reverse instance to the foregoing. An English correspondent writes.

“I was in an Indian regiment during the events of 1919 and I know only too well how easy it is to be blind to Truth, how difficult it is for Englishmen to extend their very limited out-looks. I left the army for a university. While there I was appointed to the Indian Civil Service. Fortunately as I see it now, I was impelled to resign it. Lately, away from the seclusion of a university, I have seen for myself the horrors of industrialism, materialism and machinery.



I have followed your great work for India, as a rare example of spiritual truth applied to the world. It has stirred me the more as I saw the more clearly that there were two Englands. I hope and trust that in delivering India from the menace of a materialist civilisation you will also free the great mass of English people from its evil results.

This aspect of the Indian movement is, of course, well-known to you.

But I thought that in a life, which must entail its own disappointments and sufferings, a tribute of recognition from one who was an 'Anglo-Indian' in 1919 would not be unacceptable."—31st July, 1924

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*To an Inquirer* :—No it is not true that I reduced my meals because the country was not spinning. I reduced them for the conservation of mental energy and health. I have now reverted to three meals and bhakri. But when the 'Siamese twins' lovingly pressed me before their departure from Ahmedabad to return to three meals and increase the quantity I was then taking, I said humourously that I would do so, if they re-established Hindu-Muslim unity and popularised khaddar. Either therefore the reference by them to the reduction of my meals, was a friendly licence or their taking my joke seriously. In either case I agree with the inquirer that the reference to my personal habits or restraints should have been avoided. Both the Hindu-Muslim and the khadi questions must be decided on merits. Both are a vital necessity for the national existence and we shall succeed only when we have converted the nation to our view.

—31st July, 1924

*"For Gandhiji or Country"* :—A friend says in effect the fashion nowadays has become to goad students into spinning for 'the sake of Gandhiji.' He asks whether the appeal is justified. To a certain extent an appeal of that character under certain circumstances is not inappropriate

so long as I stand for the country and that alone. An appeal to spin for my sake may go home more directly than one 'for the country.' The proper thing no doubt is for everybody to spin for the country, better still for himself in the higher sense of the term. For every one who works for the country works for himself also. He who works only for himself works to his own undoing. Our interest must be identical with and must merge in the country's. Those however who spin on occasions only and for show and afterwards stop, practise deceit.—31st July, 1924

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*Mr. Kelkar's Contempt:*—I do not think Mr. Kelkar or the *Kesari* will lose by the punishment awarded by the learned judges of the Bombay High Court. Both will survive the fine. Mr. Kelkar has earned the congratulations of journalists and public men on the brave stand he took up. The judgment has only enhanced the status of the *Kesari* great as it already is. But why this extreme sensitiveness on the part of the judges? They will surely not lose by fearless public criticism. It may not be always justified or defensible. I have not seen the articles which constituted the contempt. But what is the public gain from the punishment? Will Mr. Kelkar or the public think more kindly of the judges? If the articles merely impute bias to the judges, they have but echoed public opinion. The bias need not be conscious. But popular belief is that it is there in cases between Europeans and Indians. My own experience, wide in South Africa and comparatively limited here, confirms the popular belief. The analysis which I published in these columns of the judgments in 1919 of the special tribunals in the Punjab undoubtedly established the charge of bias against the Judges of these tribunals in the Punjab. Justice as between Europeans and Indians is a rare commodity. I would like to think otherwise. But it has not been possible. I am prepared to admit that under similar circumstances, anybody else would have done like-wise. That is another way of saying that human nature is.

the same in all climes. And judges are but human beings having the same frailties and are guided by the same feelings as the average man. I would therefore respectfully point out to the judges that if they resent public criticism in the manner they appear to have done in the *Kesari* case, they shut themselves against healthy influence. Surely it must serve as a tonic for judges when a journalist of Mr. Kelkar's status and experience finds it necessary to criticise a judgment. European judges, if they will struggle against natural bias and one-sided influences that operate upon them, should in my humble opinion encourage and welcome the criticism of Indian journalists. The pity of it is that they rarely if at all read such criticism except when it comes up before them for punishment. The judgment against Mr. Kelkar may make editors conceal their opinion or gild it. It will than seek a sub-terranean passage. We have already more than our ordinary share of it. I cannot help saying that the punishment awarded against Mr. Kelkar is calculated to increase the falsity of the life that surrounds us and still further to embitter the relations between Europeans and Indians. It was so unnecessary.—14th August, 1924

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*Reporters Beware* :—The A. P. reporter in Ahmedabad lost me (temporarily I hope) all the reputation for humanity that I had built up through painful toil. For he reported me as saying that the only message I could send to afflicted Malabar was that those who were rendered naked and hungry and home-less should spin. If Mr. Painter, may receive Rs. 15000 for damage to his reputation, I think I should receive at least Rs. 1,50,000 for damage done to mine. And if I could receive that sum, I should retrieve some-what my lost reputation and make over the sum without deduction to the Malabar sufferers. But unlike Mr. Painter, I acquit both the reporter and the agency from all blame. The local reporter tells me he was not present at the meeting. The people who attended the meeting heard little but

the listeners thought I had said something about spinning. What could be more natural for me than that I should ask the Malabar sufferers to spin for food, clothing and lodging? Was not the great Acharya Ray doing the same thing? The poor reporter forgot that Dr. Ray was doing it after the people had settled down. However the awful slip is a lesson for the reporters and the public. The reporters hold the reputation of public men in the hollow of their hands. It is not a light thing to misreport public men's speeches and acts. The public have to be equally careful about believing every report as gospel truth. So far as I am concerned, I must continue to warn the public and all concerned against believing what may be reported of me unless it is certified by me as correct. I am in no hurry to have every word of mine reported. The reporters would therefore do me a favour, if they would not report me at all when they cannot get their notes confirmed by me.

I am obliged to say all this because I have many painful memories of misreporting. In 1896 I published in India a pamphlet covering 30 pages or more on British Indians in South Africa. A five-line summary was cabled by Reuter to Natal. It was wholly contrary to the gist of my pamphlet. This very incorrect report inflamed the Natal colonists. I was nearly lynched to death by an infuriated crowd on my return to Natal. Lawyer friends pressed me to bring a suit for damages. But I was a non-resister even then I refused to sue. I lost nothing by not suing. When the colonists perceived that I was not a 'bad sort,' and that they had cruelly misjudged me, they regretted the error. I therefore in the end lost nothing by self-restraint. But I have no desire to court another such experience even though it may bring me added glory. I want to put in more work, if God so wills it. I must therefore ask the reporters to spare me yet a while.—14th August, 1924

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*Lord Lytton's Explanation:*—Lord Lytton's letter to the Poet

in my opinion aggravates the insult His Excellency seeks to explain away. I hardly think that the fine grammatical distinction made by him in any way mends matters. No one I am sure thought that His Excellency had the women of India in general in his mind when he uttered the indiscreet words. The complaint is that he uttered the charge at all. When a responsible person makes any charge, there is always a double presumption. The one is that he has entirely satisfied himself about it and that he can prove it to the world. The other is that the evil which is the subject matter of the charge is fairly general. Apart from the police testimony is His Excellency in a position to prove the charge to the satisfaction of the public, say to the satisfaction of the Poet? Does he not know that the police are thoroughly distrusted by the public? Does he not know that they are so far as the public is concerned as a rule in the defendant's box? Again assuming that the charge is true of some women and some men, is he in a position to prove that the evil is so general as to call for a public condemnation. Will a responsible Indian be justified in saying that some English civilians are guilty say of corruption and immorality because to his knowledge a few rare cases have been so found? Will he not be indignantly called upon to name the parties and take them to a court of law and also to apologise to the civilians for turning what was a charge against particular individuals into a charge against a body? Will he be permitted to take shelter under the adjective 'some'? If Lord Lytton never intended to say more than that Indians contain among them degraded specimens of humanity as every other nation, where was the occasion for his complaint in a serious speech when he knew that every word of his speech would be scanned here and have due weight abroad. I cannot therefore help respectfully suggesting that if he did not mean to cast any aspersion on Indian womanhood and Indian manhood, he should unreservedly withdraw and apologise for the charge. He will thereby add to his dignity and even prestige. If on the other hand he has proofs of the kind I have suggested, he should bravely sustain the charge and place the

proofs before the public. A lame explanation is no explanation. It adds injury to insult.—28th August, 1924.

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*A Bad Comparison* :—A Roman Catholic correspondent who occupies the position of the secretary of a Catholic Indian Association has written a long letter from which I take the following extracts :

“Time and again I have noticed letters appearing under flaring captions in the nationalist press, drawing a comparison between your life and activities, and that of Christ. But writers of these letters not contenting themselves with this achievement of theirs, have gone one step further and have held up ‘Gandhiji’ as ‘the modern Jesus’ (!) to the people of India. I was wondering how far they would go, and these letters which flooded the press during your incarceration, stopped awhile; but with your release they have revived. Rejoinders have proved ineffective and that is why I am writing this letter to you.

Could you look with complacency on this devotion and loyalty bordering on insanity? Nobody denies that you are a great man in your own way; even your opponents grant you that. But you are not God, at any rate I have not discovered you claiming divinity till now. You are preaching politics and not religion. Besides, you are a married man with wife and children. How then is it possible for these blind admirers to see in your life and work any resemblance to that of Christ? I thought that perhaps the doctrine of non-violence of which you are such a noble champion has led them to draw this comparison. But seen here you are an ardent nationalist advocating *ahimsa* in politics as a means to an end. Christ on the other hand not only refused to plunge into politics, asking all to ‘render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s’ but lived and felt and spoke in terms of humanity transcending by His very nature the cramping and narrow limi-

tations of race and nationalism. He showed also in the most unmistakable manner that 'physical force' for a righteous cause was not at all incompatible with the sublime doctrines He preached. Here again I fail to see the boasted 'likeness and resemblance'.

So it is only natural for me to ask you what you think of all that these writers have written about you."

The pain that the writer feels over the comparison is obvious. In answer to his question I may repeat what I have said before that I do not like these comparisons at all. They serve no useful purpose and cause unnecessary hurt to the feelings of the devotees of the masters with whose life mine is compared. I lay claim to nothing exclusively divine in me. I do not claim prophetship. I am but a humble seeker after Truth and bent upon finding it. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical is directed to that end. And as I know that God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty, I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed classes. And as I cannot render this service without entering politics, I find myself in them. Thus I am no master. I am but a struggling, erring, humble servant of India and there-through of humanity.

There is already enough superstition in our country. No effort should be spared to resist further addition in the shape of Gandhi worship. Personally I have a horror of all adoration. I believe in adoring virtue apart from the wearer. And that can be done only after the wearer's death. Form is nothing. It is perishable. Virtue persists and incarnates in one person or another. The poor Gonds know nothing of me or my mission. I know I have no power to give any person anything. The very idea of my spirit visiting and possessing any person is repugnant to me. The practice can only do harm and lead to fraud. I urge co-workers to put down the worship the corres-

pondent describes. It is a sin to let simple folk such as the Gonds to be encouraged in the practice of superstition.—11TH September 1924

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*If I were Viceroy.*—Two English friends seeking to justify the repressive policy now being pursued in Bengal asked me what I would have done if I had been in Lord Reading's or Lord Lytton's place. The answer came ready to my lips. But I observed that I gave no satisfaction to the friends. The reason for dissatisfaction was that they thought that it was easy enough for me to give the answer so readily, as I was not as a matter of fact in the place of these distinguished Englishmen. But as, after having thought over my answer from every point of view, I regard it to be sound, and as I have no doubt that many Englishmen, who honestly believe that repression is justified, think like the two friends, I venture to reproduce my answer with some amplification.

The very first thing then that I would have done would have been to summon Indians of position and trust, and I would have shown them all the papers and would have been guided by them. In the case of Subhas Chandra Bose, I would have confronted him with my suspicion and published his statement. In consultation with those Indians of position and trust, I would also have summoned Deshabandhu Das and put the whole burden of responsibility on his shoulders, in so far as the suspected members of his party were concerned. By this procedure I would have quietly ensured public peace or been assured that the information given to me was wrong. This is the least I would have done, and that too if I had no trust in my legislature or if there was no time to summon it. What is more, I would have realised my own unenviable position. I would have seen at once its hypocrisy. Having therefore dealt with the crisis, I would have tried to discover the true disease, of which the crisis was but a symptom. For that purpose I would have summoned representative Indians before me and tried to as-



certain why there were young, able and otherwise peaceful men, who would mercilessly kill innocent men and recklessly put their own lives in danger. I would have learnt that they had no selfish end and that they wanted liberty for their country. I would therefore have been guided, in dealing with the root cause by the advice of the summoned representatives, taking care that no legitimate foreign interest was thereby jeopardised, and having done this I would have breathed free in the knowledge that it would be equally the business of my legislature as mine to deal with any such future eruption.

I know that in the foregoing I have made no new suggestion. But its staleness is its merit. The existing system has lived on terrorism and Viceroy after Viceroy as a rule has shut his eyes to the obvious necessity of consulting Indian opinion. The obduracy proves not the uselessness of the advice, it proves the worthlessness of the system, under which such systematic defiance of public opinion is possible. No wonder the Viceroy, instead of obtaining the public support which he thought he should have had, is obliged to face severe condemnation from practically the whole Indian opinion.—27th November 1924

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*A Misunderstanding.*—My note on the Gaya Congress Resolution about the repudiation of public debts has I observe given rise to some misunderstanding. It is unfortunate that it was published at a time when we are thinking of unity. The fact is that the note was written three months ago in...to a correspondent. From week to week my assistants put it by to give place to other things that in their opinion were more important. When it was finally published they did not see any incogruity between that note which was bound to raise useless controversy and other writings which were intended to emphasise matters of agreement. Whilst, therefore, I consider the appearance of the note inopportune at the present moment, I must say that it still represents my view of public debts. Whatever the Gaya resolution may mean, my note is quite fair. I do not

seek to repudiate all debts incurred by the present Government but I do submit that when the final transference of power comes it will be necessary to examine all the transactions of the Government and they will have to stand the light of examination. Suppose for instance the Government were to make a gift of a hundred million to a foreign syndicate for the exploitation of the mineral resources of the country, it would not only be just for, but it will be the duty of, the Swaraj Government to repudiate it. Indeed perhaps I go a step further in one respect, than the Gaya resolution. I would claim to bring under scrutiny not merely the transactions since the date of the resolution but every transaction of the Government which may appear to bear an immoral taint. For this Government claims to be and is presumed to act justly, honourably and as trustee for the millions of the people of India. Breach of trust or any other unjust dealing cannot claim the protection that prescription gives to honourable dealings.—27th November, 1924

M. K. G.

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*Rama Nama.*—It is easy enough to take a vow under a stimulating influence. But it is difficult to keep to it especially in the midst of temptation. God is our only Help in such circumstances. I therefore suggested to the meeting Rama Nama. Rama, Allah and God are to me convertible terms. I had discovered that simple people deluded themselves into the belief that appeared to them in their distress. I wanted to remove the superstition. I knew that I appeared to nobody. It was pure hallucination for them to rely upon a frail mortal. I therefore presented them with a simple and well tried formula that has never failed, namely to invoke the assistance of God every morning before sunrise and every evening before bed time for the fulfilment of the vows. Millions of Hindus know him under the name of Rama. As a child I was taught to call upon Ram when I was seized with fear. I know many of my companions to whom Rama Nam has been the greatest solace in the hour

of their need. I presented it to the Dharalas and to the untouchables. I present it also to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by over much learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves. Rama Nam is not for those who tempt God in every way possible and ever expect it to save. It is for those who walk in the fear of God, who want to restrain themselves and cannot in spite of themselves.—22nd January, 1925

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*Stoning to Death.*—I have a long telegram sent to me as President of the National Congress regarding the stoning to death in Afghanistan of two members of the Ahmadia sect. I purposely refrained from any comment on the awful penalty imposed on the late Niamatullahkhan but I dare not ignore the incidents now reported especially when a personal appeal for expression of opinion is made to me. I understand that the stoning method is enjoined in the *Quran* only in certain circumstances which do not cover the cases under observation. But as a human being living in the fear of God, I should question the morality of the method under any circumstance whatsoever. Whatever may have been necessary or permissible during Prophet's lifetime and in that age, this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the *Quran*. Every formula of every religion has in this age of reason, to submit to the acid test of reason and universal assent. Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world. I extend my sympathy to the sect in its distress. Needless to say I can express no opinion on the merits of the case. I do not think the public has any data for forming an opinion on merits. It is the form of penalty that wounds the human conscience. Both reason and heart refuse to reconcile themselves to torture for any crime, no matter how vile the crime may be.—26th February, 1925

*Some Posers :—*

‘A well wisher’ sends these lines for my meditation :

‘The Bible can be read in 566 languages. In how many can the *Upanishads* and the *Gīta* ?

‘How many leper asylums and institutions for the depressed and the distressed have the missionaries? How many have you ?

It is usual for me to receive such posers. ‘A {well’ wisher’ deserves an answer. I have great regard for the missionaries for their zeal and self-sacrifice. But I have not hesitated to point out to them that both are often misplaced. What though the Bible were translated in every tongue in the world? Is a patent medicine better than the *Upanishads* for being advertised in more languages than the *Upanishads*? An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody will see it. The Bible was a greater power when the early fathers preached it than it is today. ‘A well wisher’ has little conception of the way truth works, if he thinks that the translation of the Bible in more languages than the *Upanishads* is any test of its superiority. Truth has to be lived if it is to fructify. But if it is any satisfaction to ‘A well wisher’ to have my answer I may gladly tell him that the *Upanishads* and the *Gīta* have been translated into far fewer languages than the Bible. I have never been curious enough to know in how many languages they are translated.

As for the second question, too, I must own that the missionaries have founded many leper asylums and the like. I have founded none. But I stand unmoved. I am not competing with the missionaries or any body else in such matters. I am trying humbly to serve humanity as God leads me. The founding of leper asylums etc. is only one of the ways, and perhaps not the best, of serving humanity. But even such noble service loses much of its nobility when conversion is the motive behind it. That service is the noblest which is rendered for its own sake. But let me not be misunderstood. The missionaries that selflessly work away in such asylums com-

mand my respect. I am ashamed to have to confess that Hindus have become so callous as to care little for the waifs and strays of India, let alone the world. —26th February, 1925

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*India's Plight.* —Mr. Higginbottom of the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad was examined by the Taxation Inquiry Committee on the 6th instant when he gave expression to interesting opinions on several matters of importance. I cull the following from the *Civil and Military Gazette* :

“India, while being poor, is the most extravagant country on the face of the earth in matters of agriculture. The extreme poverty in the land is not so much due to want of either land or material for agriculture but want of a scientific system of agriculture. The existence of numerous uneconomic cattle and religious mendicants are the source of a fearful economic drain on the country. There are far too many cattle for food supply, and there are too many cattle for the work to be done. Lack of food reduces the size and value of cattle. Lack of food and the refusal to eliminate unfit ones has led to the Indian cow giving the least amount of milk of any cow on the earth. Indian milk is most expensive to produce and over 90 per cent of the cattle in this country is an economic loss.....  
.....The most expensive manure, which is difficult to get, is being burnt by the people.

“The potential taxability of India is very great, but her present taxable capacity is very low. The burden of the land tax is very much lower than what it ought to be. Land revenue in India is burden-some when the holding is smaller than an economic holding.

“Legislation is necessary for abolishing uneconomic holdings. The present legislation was putting a premium on small farming. The size of a holding is seldom sufficiently large for the use of labour-saving machinery. The present state of legislation is making all economic holdings to become a number of uneconomic holdings. There is absence of a proper system

of village industries to take care of the surplus people. Further the land is asked to provide a whole time living for a very large number of men and animals, who can work on it only for half the time. The remedy is to devise and develop rural seasonal industries for men, women and oxen so that they can be gainfully occupied for a portion of the time when the land does not require their services.....

The landlord regards his income as personal, and does not consider the improvement of the country side as his gain. Moreover tenants and landlords are eternally at war."

These extracts deal with four things. Waste of valuable manure, the distressing problem of cattle, uneconomic holdings and want of occupation for the peasantry all the year round. All these, apart from the burden of taxation deepen the poverty of the masses and deserve consideration at the hands of all patriots. Every one of them is capable of being handled in an effective manner. In a country where the cow is an object of worship, there should be no cattle problem at all. But our cow-worship has resolved itself into an ignorant fanaticism. The fact that we have more cattle than we can support is a matter for urgent treatment. I have already suggested the taking over of the question by cow protection societies. It is their legitimate function. The question of uneconomic holdings requires revision of the family system. The question of wanton destruction of manure requires a true agricultural education and that of unemployment for half the year for millions of men and woman can only be solved by the spinning wheel. It is clear that to the fight with the Government we must add a scientific study and handling of the problems discussed by Mr. Sam Higginbottom.—26th February, 1925

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*A Typical Letter.*—A well-known Indian public worker once wrote to a well-known Englishman a letter asking for an interview. Here is a characteristic reply sent by the Englishman :

"In reply to your letter I regret that I cannot see you

for the simple reason that, in my opinion, no benefit could be derived by you from an interview with me in the present state of the Indian question. I can neither understand nor sympathise with the action and purpose of the leaders of the Indian community. Your people must surely understand something of the nature of the race of men with whom they are dealing. Much has been given you by the British Government. Can you not put to its full use that which has been given in the spirit of justice? It is possible for your people, by high organisation of their voting power and by the careful selection and continual criticism of their best men, to *prove* over a series of years that they are capable of exercising the highest duties and fulfilling the most exacting responsibilities of citizenship. I am sure that in giving this proof of political capacity you would carry with you for future political evolution, the best minds and the most effective sympathies of my countrymen. If you place your trust in political bargains among English parties, you can but be disappointed by results."

It is difficult to choose whether to deplore the insolence of the letter or to admire the sincerity of the writer's convictions. He had made up his mind that he had nothing to learn from the would-be visitor. He had only to give. Who can satisfy this Englishman who keeps himself locked up in a safe and refuses to see that no amount of argumentative powers can possibly fit us for the 'exacting responsibility of citizenship'? Who can prove to such an Englishman that the responsibilities of citizenship require the primary capacity for self-defence and that this cannot be acquired by learning the art of debating? Who can show to him that his own race learnt the art of self-government by developing the capacity for defending its country and that such debating power as it has learnt came to it only after the English people began to have self-government? Who can show to this writer and his like that we Indians think not that much has been given us in the spirit of justice, but that so little has been given to us, and that too by force of circumstances? Lastly, who can show him that we put our trust not in

political bargaining among English parties but in our own strength?' This ignorance of Englishmen and their attitude of studied isolation is truly deplorable. The letter, however, teaches us a lesson. We must not court insult by asking for interviews with those we do not know. Our own conduct will right our relations with the whole world.—12th March, 1925

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*A Politician?*—I have repeatedly expressed my view of caste and intermarriage. With me marriage is no necessary test of friendship even between husband and wife, let alone their respective clans. I cannot picture to myself a time when all mankind will have one religion. As a rule there will, therefore, be the religious bar. People will marry in their own religion. Similarly there will persist the territorial restriction. The caste restriction is an extension of the same principle. It is a social convenience. An English nobleman's son does not, as a rule, marry a grocer's daughter. She would, as a rule, be rejected on the sole ground of her birth. I am opposed to untouchability because it limits the field of service. It is a comfort man or woman seeks for him or herself. And I see no harm in restricting the circle of comfort or being selective in regard to such a life-change as marriage. If a Kenya settler will not tolerate my presence in Kenya because I will not give my daughter in marriage to him or receive his for my son I should be sorry for him but would content myself with exclusion from Kenya rather than be compelled to contract an incompatible tie. I would only add that the Kenya settler would not permit me even to think of any such relation. And if I put forth any such claim it would be regarded as an additional reason for excluding me from his preserve. Though the point is absolutely clear as it seems to me and though marriage is restricted in a practice all over the world to classes, clans etc., Mr. Andrews' correspondent is not likely to be satisfied with my answer. But I can give him the assurance that I have not evaded the issue for fear of giving offence. I am not a politician in the narrow sense given to the



word by the correspondent. I have written as I have believed. I have sacrificed no principle to gain a political advantage. Probably, I would gain greater reputation in the circle I move in, if I did not accept the Hindu restraint on inter-marriage. And what is my central aim? It is equal treatment for the whole of humanity and that equal treatment means equality of service. The duty of service may be denied to none. The privilege of marriage presupposes temperamental and other affinity. It would be no crime for a woman to reject the hand of a red haired man but she would be guilty of a gross sin if she neglected the duty of serving him because of his red hair. Marriage is a matter of choice. Service is an obligation that cannot be shirked.—12th March, 1925

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*Have I Property?*—Among the many curious inquiries I receive, here are some from a correspondent in Guntur District: 'People say Ghanhiji does not do what he says. He preaches poverty but possesses property. He wants others to become poor, but he is not poor. He advocates simple and inexpensive life yet his is expensive. So answer the questions below. Do you take anything from the A. I. C. C. or Gujarat Congress Committee for your living and touring expenses? If so, what is the amount? If not, how are you meeting the expenses for your long tours and your food and clothing, if you are, as people take you to be, a propertyless man?' There is much more in the letter of the same kind but I have taken out the most salient points.

I do make the claim that I attempt to act as I preach. But I must confess that I am not as inexpensive in my wants as I would like to be. My food since my illness costs more than it should. By no means can I call it a poor man's food. My travels too cost more than they did before my illness. I am no longer able to travel long distances third class. Nor do I travel, as I did before, without a companion. All this means not simplicity and poverty, but the reverse of it. I draw nothing

from the A. I. C. C. or the Gujarat Committee. But friends find my travelling expenses including food and clothing. Often during my tours railway tickets are purchased by those who invite me and my host everywhere covers me with kind attention which often embarrasses me. People present me during my tours with much more Khaddar than I need. The balance goes to clothe those who need it or it is put in the general Khaddar stock of the Ashram which is conducted in the public interest. I own no property and yet I feel that I am perhaps the richest man in the world. For I have never been in want either for myself or for my public concerns. God has always and invariably responded in time. I can recall several occasions when almost the last penny had been spent for my public activities. Monies then came in from the most unexpected quarters. These responses have made me humble and filled me with a faith in God and His goodness that will stand the strain of utter distress if it ever becomes my lot in life. It is open to the world therefore to laugh at my dispossessing myself of all property. For me the dispossession has been a positive gain. I would like people to compete with me in my contentment. It is the richest treasure I own. Hence it is perhaps right to say that though I preach poverty, I am a rich man!—30th April, 1925

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*Deification of me.*—A Muslim friend met me at Dungargadh station and told me that the process of deifying me especially among the Gonds was going on as merrily as ever. I have expressed my horror and strongest disapproval of this type of idolatry more than once. I claim to be a mere mortal, heir to all the weaknesses that human flesh betrays. It would be infinitely better that the Gonds should be taught to understand the meaning of my simple message than that they should indulge in a meaningless deification of me which can do no good either to them or to me and can intensify the superstitious

nature of such simple people as the Gonds. I bespeak the help of every Congressman in the necessary work of undeceiving the Gonds of their error.—7th May, 1925

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*Nationalism v. Internationalism.*—A gentleman met me in Darjeeling and related to me the story of a nurse who preferred not to serve her nation to the injury of others. The story was, I could see at once, related for my edification. I gently explained to the friend that evidently he had not followed my writings or doings, though he claimed to have done so. I told him, too, that my patriotism was not narrow, and that, it included not merely the welfare of India but the whole world. I told him further, that being a humble man knowing my own limitations, I was satisfied with the service of my own country, taking care at the same time that I did nothing with the intention of injuring another country. In my opinion, it is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, *i. e.*, when peoples belonging to different countries have organised themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on, the ruin of the other. Indian nationalism has, I hope, struck a different path. It wants to organise itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large. Any way, there is no uncertainty about my patriotism or nationalism. God having cast my lot in the midst of the people of India, I should be untrue to my Maker if I failed to serve them. If I do not know how to serve them I shall never know how to serve humanity. And I cannot possibly go wrong so long as I do not harm other nations in the act of serving my country.—18th June, 1925

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*Institutions before Parents.*—During my Bengal tour I heard the astounding statement that the inmates of a public institu-

tion claimed to prefer the maintenance of their institution to that of their parents. This was said to command my approval. If anything I have written in these pages has given any such impression, I apologise to the readers. I am not conscious of any such guilt. I owe all I am to my parents. I felt towards them as Shravana is said to have done towards his parents. So when I heard the statement it was with greatest difficulty that I could curb the anger that was rising in me. The young man who took up the position was hardly serious about it. But now-a-days it has become the fashion with some young men to adopt the superior attitude and pose as paragons of perfection. In my opinion the maintenance of one's aged and infirm parents is a first charge upon grown-up sons. They may not marry if they are not in a position to support their parents. They may not take up public work till this primary condition is fulfilled. They must starve so that their parents may be fed and clothed. What however, young men are not expected to do is to comply with the demand of thoughtless or ignorant parents. Parents have been known to demand money for things not required for sustenance but for false show or for uncalled-for marriage expenses of daughters. In my opinion it is the duty of public workers respectfully to refuse to meet such demands. As a matter of fact I cannot remember having met a single deserving case of starvation of a public worker. I have found some living in want. I have found a few who should get more than they are able to give themselves. But as their work prospers and their worth is known they will not suffer from want. Difficulties and trials make a man. They are a sign of healthy growth. If every young man found himself in plenty and never knew what it was to go without anything necessary, he may be found wanting when the trial comes. Sacrifice is joy.

It is, therefore, not right to parade one's sacrifice before the public. I was told by several workers that they did not mind any sacrifice. On cross-questioning, I was told that the sacrifice consisted in living by begging, in other words on donations. I told them that there was no sacrifice in living on

donations. Many public workers did so, but they did not on that account claim to have sacrificed anything. Many young men have sacrificed lucrative careers. That is certainly to their credit. But even there I should respectfully suggest that praising can well be overdone. No sacrifice is worth the name unless it is a joy. Sacrifice and a long face go ill together. Sacrifice is 'making sacred.' He must be a poor specimen of humanity who is in need of sympathy for his sacrifice. Buddha renounced everything because he could not help it. To have anything was a torture to him. The Lokamanya remained poor because it was painful for him to possess riches. Andrews regards the possession of even a few rupees a burden, and continually contrives to lose them if he gets any. I have often told him that he is in need of a care-taker. He listens, he laughs and repeats the same performance without the slightest contrition. *Madar-i-Hind* is a terrible goddess. She will exact the willing, aye, even unwilling sacrifice of many a young man and young woman before she deigns to say, 'Well done my children you are now free.' We are as yet playing at sacrifice. The reality has still to come.—25th June, 1925

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*Harsh V. Pleasant Truth:*—With reference to my removal of certain passages from a correspondent's letter recently published, he thus complains:

"In spite of the expurgation you have thought fit to effect in my letter I may claim that in all my letters to you, especially where communal questions are involved, I have tried to observe not the 'prudent' maxim, (which means in brief 'speak not the unpleasant truth') although it be found in most of our received texts of Manu, but the saying of William Lloyd Garrison, the American slave-liberator, which has stood for many years at the head of the *Indian Social Reformer* of Bombay as its motto: *I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice,*" etc.

I do not mind harsh truth but I do object to spiced truth.

Spicy language is as foreign to truth as hot chillies to a healthy stomach. The passages removed by me were not necessary to elucidate the meaning of the correspondent or give point to it. They were offensive without being useful or necessary. There seems to be the fashion to think that in order to be truthful one must use harsh language; whereas truth suffers when it is harshly put. It is like wanting to support strength: Truth being itself fully strong is insulted when an attempt is made to support it with harshness. I see no conflict between the Sanskrit text and Garrison's motto quoted by the correspondent. In my opinion the Sanskrit text means that one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not speak it, if one cannot do so in a gentle way; meaning thereby that there is not truth in a man who cannot control his tongue. In other words, truth without non-violence is not truth, but untruth. Garrison's motto requires to be interpreted in terms of his own life. He was one of the gentlest of men of his time. Mark his language. He will be as harsh as truth, but since truth is never harsh but always gentle and beneficial, the motto can only mean that Garrison would be as gentle as truth but no more. Both the texts have relation to the inner state of the speaker or writer, not to the effect that will be produced upon those to whom the speech or the writing is addressed. The *Indian Social Reformer* is rarely, if ever, harsh. It tries to be fair though often jumps to conclusions in a hurry and is obliged later to revise its estimate of men and things. In these days of surrounding bitterness one cannot be too cautious. After all who knows the absolute truth? It is in ordinary affairs of life, only a relative term. What is truth to me is not necessarily truth to the rest of my companions. We are all like the blind men who on examining an elephant gave different descriptions of the same animal according to the touch they were able to have of him. And they were all, according to their own lights, in the right. But we know also that they were all in the wrong. Everyone of them fell far short of the truth. One cannot be too insistent therefore upon the necessity of guarding oneself

against bitterness. Bitterness blurs the vision and to that extent disables one from seeing even the limited truth that the physically blind men in the fable were able to do.—17th September, 1925.

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*Poor on 14 Lacs.*—A friend writes :—

“You are reported to claim to be a *Sannyasi* and yet to have taken scrupulous care to have provided yourself with handsome living for yourself and your dependents and that you have made to that end a trust of your estate which is worth fourteen lacs and that you are leading a very easy and comfortable life. Some of us were staggered to hear this. Will you kindly enlighten the public on the point? I myself refuse to believe the report.”

If this query had not come from an honest friend whom I know, I would have taken no notice of it, especially as some months ago, in answer to a question about my personal expenses I have dealt with my private affairs. I never had 14 lacs of rupees which I could call my own. What I did have I had certainly reduced to a trust when I renounced all property. But it was a trust for public purposes. I retained for myself nothing out of that trust. But I have never described myself as a *Sannyasi*. *Sannyas* is made of sterner stuff. I regard myself as a householder, leading a humble life of service and in common with my fellow workers, living upon the charity of friends who defray the expenses of Satyagrahashram at Sabarmati of which I am one of the founders. The life I am living is certainly very easy and very comfortable, if ease and comfort are a mental state. I have all I need without the slightest care of having to keep any personal treasures. Mine is a life full of joy in the midst of incessant work. In not wanting to think of what tomorrow will bring for me I feel as free as a bird. Indeed at the present moment I may even be described to be living a life of luxury. An English lady, the other day, came to me whilst the train was standing at Gaya station and said,

"How is it I see you travelling so comfortably in a second class compartment surrounded by so many people when I expected to find you in a crowded third class compartment? Have you not said that you want to live like the poor? Do you suppose poor people can afford the luxury of second class travelling? Is not your practice inconsistent with your profession?" I straightaway pleaded guilty and did not care to inform this fair inquirer that my body had become too dilapidated to bear the fatigue of incessant third class travelling. I feel that the weakness of the body could not be pleaded as any excuse. I am painfully aware of the fact that there are tens of thousands of men and women much weaker in body that travel third class because they have no friends to provide them with second class travelling expenses. There was, undoubtedly, an inconsistency between my practice and profession of identification with the poor. Such is the tragedy of life and yet in the midst of it I refuse to part with my joy. The thought that I am ceaselessly and honestly struggling against the requirements of the flesh sustains me in spite of the contradiction that the good lady could not fail to see.—1st October, 1925.

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*Tree Protection.*—All religion is presumably in response to the human aspiration or need. Religion is some irresistible binding force. The cow was a peremptory need and we had cow protection in India. Digging of wells where water is scarce is a religion. It would be ludicrous to dig wells where the water supply is inexhaustible. Similarly whilst tree plantation would be superfluous in say Travancore, in some parts of India it is a religious necessity. Such a place is undoubtedly Cutch. It has a beautiful climate but some parts threaten to be a desolate waste unless there is proper rainfall in them. Rainfall can be almost regulated by deforestation or afforestation. Cutch needs conservation of every tree and every shrub. The most pleasant function therefore that I was required to perform in Cutch was the planting of these trees and inauguration of a



tree planting and protection society. The enterprise was due to the genius of one man. His name is Jayakrishna Indrajit. Gujarat has very few specialists. Of these Sjt. Jayakrishna is among the most distinguished. He is a lover of plant life. He is the author of an accurate work on the fauna and flora of the Barda hills in the Porbunder State. He is now forest officer in Cutch and is trying to interest the people of Cutch and the State in forestry. He believes that with judicious plantation Cutch can be turned into a land flowing with milk and honey. He is of opinion, and I venture to share his belief that the parts which the wind ruins by turning them into sand heaps can be turned into gardens if its inhabitants will pledge themselves each to plant and rear so many trees per year as they buy and keep cows. Whether all the alluring promises which he makes can be realised or not there is no doubt that Cutch needs tree plantations on a large scale. It is wicked waste to destroy a single tree in Cutch for firewood. The State should import all the firewood or coal that it may need. It should be criminal to cut down a single tree in a place like Cutch. I hope therefore that the society established in Mandvi will open branches all over Cutch and by co-operation between the people and the State it is possible to cover the land with thousands of trees within a short time. At little expense the inhabitants of Cutch can make an immense addition to its wealth and beauty. They have a capable enthusiast to guide them. Will they have the sense and the energy to follow his guidance?

What is true of Cutch is almost equally true of Kathiawad. This land of immense possibilities is cut up into small States each possessing sovereign powers with more or less limitations. There is little or no co-ordination between them. The people therefore in this little compact peninsula though having every thing else in common are governed by different heads under different laws. The conservation of forests, systematic plantation of trees, irrigation and many other things cannot be properly done without a common policy. I reproduced sometime

ago the opinion of Mr. Elmhurst that if the chiefs and the people of Kathiawad did not evolve and follow a common policy of tree plantation Kathiawad was likely to suffer from a water famine of such magnitude as to make life impossible in that land of fine soldiers that once were. In Cutch, Kathiawad, Rajputana, Sind and such other places a study of practical botany should be compulsory in all schools. And the princes can do worse than encourage in every possible way the habit of planting and rearing trees.—19th November, 1925.

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*A Brahmo Prayer.*—Here is a letter from a Brahmo friend:

“I am glad to see that your attention was drawn by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to the great offence that you had unknowingly given to the Brahmo Samaj a few years ago by calling Raja Rammohan Rai a pigmy. Now that you have explained under what circumstances you had used that expression and how high is your admiration for the great founder of the Brahmo Samaj, I hope my Brahmo friends in Bengal and elsewhere will with equal magnanimity of mind accept your explanation and join you in your spiritual and social work which if rightly understood is the mission of the Brahmo Samaj. Your faith in prayer and simplicity of life, your insistence on using reason in interpreting Shastras, your love for Truth from all quarters, your reverence for great prophets like Christ, Buddha and Mohamed, your work for communal unity, the removal of untouchability and for temperance,—have already won for you the respect and admiration of many individual Brahmos. I hope and trust that now that you have removed the misunderstanding, the Brahmo Samaj will welcome your efforts for the regeneration of our motherland in matters spiritual and social. May this understanding bear good fruit under Divine Providence is my humble prayer.”

Whilst I join the prayer let me point out that I never called the great Raja a pigmy in the absolute sense. I have looked up the old file of *Young India*. The issue of 13-4-'21 sets forth the

circumstances under which I used the expression and the speech reads better even than I had recollections of it. Nor have I ever known that the Brahmos have held aloof from participation in my activities any more than the others or that they have kept aloof because of my reference to the great reformer in my Cuttack speech. In any event if any have, I hope and pray that they will now respond. I note in the Brahmo friend's letter a conspicuous omission. The greatest of my activities is the Charkha. I hold it to be the best part of my service—social, political and spiritual. For it includes these branches of service. My invitation to all to spin if only for half an hour daily for the sake of the starving millions of this land makes the movement at once both political and spiritual. Let the writer and the other Brahmo friends therefore take note of the little wheel and its product Khaddar.—19th November, 1925.

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*Passengers' Day.*—It is a good idea to observe a passengers' Day and review the progress of improvement in the condition of millions of passengers who use either the railways or the waterways connecting one part of India with another. In my palmy days when I enjoyed the privilege of travelling 3rd class I used to have much to say about the conditions of 3rd class passengers whether by rail or water. But on principle of 'out of sight out of mind' not experiencing in my own person the difficulties of 3rd class railway travelling I have ceased to write upon it. But the forthcoming Passengers' Day reminds one of one's duty towards the dumb millions who are packed like sardins in ill-constructed dirty compartments and whose wants no body ever cares to look after. The difficulties due to the indifference of railway authorities are however one part of the distress. It would be well to lay stress upon that part; but the indifference and ignorance of the passengers themselves are almost equally responsible for their difficulties. The speakers therefore at the meetings that would be held in different parts of the country would do well to emphasise the duty of passengers

towards themselves. Our insanitary habits, want of consideration for our neighbours, insistence upon getting into overcrowded compartments and a host of other bad habits must be removed before 3rd class railway travelling can be made bearable. It requires great vigilance and there is risk of an association that deals with the internal aspect of the question even courting unpopularity in the initial stages. I wish every success to the effort of Mr. Jivraj Nensi and his fellow organisers.—19th November, 1925.

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*China's Plight.*—I hope that the readers of *Young India* have read the very long cablegram received by me from the Commissioner, Foreign Affairs, National Government, Canton. The cablegram has evidently been sent to several parts of the world.

I do not know what we in India can do to help China in her distress. We ourselves are in need of help. If we had any voice in the management of our own affairs we should not tolerate the humiliating and degrading spectacle of Indian soliders shooting innocent Chinese students and others like rabbits, *i. e.* if the story recited in the cablegram is to be believed. We can, therefore, only pray for their deliverance from all their troubles. But the situation in China reminds us that our slavery is not merely injurious to ourselves but it also injures our neighbours. It demonstrates also most forcibly that India is being kept under subjection, not merely for the exploitation of India herself, but that it enables Great Britain to exploit the great and ancient Chinese nation.

If any responsible Chinese should read those lines I would commend to their attention the method that we have adopted in India, that is non-violence. Let the Chinese understand that they are numerically the greatest nation on earth. They have glorious traditions, they are not emasculated as we are. If they would only follow the policy of non-violence and truth, victory is not only certain but it is very near. Surely a nation

containing nearly four hundred million souls, need not be crushed under the weight of European and Japanese ambition. China can free herself from foreign exploitation by purely internal peaceful effort. If she succeeds in her boycott of foreign goods, she removes the temptation in the way of foreign powers to retain their hold on her.—30th July, 1925.

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*Wreath or Garland.*—I have observed in many parts of India but in Bengal especially the custom of garlanding guests with wreaths instead of a beautiful *bona fide* Swadeshi *mala*. I suppose it is considered more dignified to offer wreaths because they are much more expensive than the *malas*—garlands. Wreaths are an importation from the West. So far as I am aware they are used for decorating coffins. The flowers are held together with a wire which often hurts. I am one of such individuals who have been hurt by the wires of wreaths which have been forced upon me by over-zealous admirers. It is difficult to carry a wreath in one's hand for fear of getting hurt. A wreath being stiff instead of adorning the body, in my opinion, disfigures it. Whereas a *mala* strung together beautifully on a piece of string hangs loosely round the neck and causes no discomfort. Will Reception Committees please note?—6th August, 1925.

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*No Labour, No Meal.*—Some time ago I was taken to a magnificent mansion called the 'Marble Palace' in Calcutta. It is richly furnished with some very expensive and some very beautiful paintings. The owners feed in the compound in front of the palace all the beggars who choose to go there, and I am told that the number every day is several thousand. This is no doubt a princely charity. It does great credit to the benevolent spirit of the donors but the incongruity of this ragged humanity feeding whilst the majestic palace is, as it were, mocking at their wretched condition does not seem to strike the

donors at all. Another such painful sight was witnessed by me on my visit to Suri, where the reception committee had arranged for feeding the beggars of the district. At the Marble Palace the crowd that besieged me passed through the line of beggars eating off their dusty leaves spread on the ground. Some almost trampled over them. It was by no means a pleasant spectacle. In Suri it was a little more decently managed, for the crowd was not to pass through the line of beggars but the motor car that drove me to my destination, was slowly taken through the line of the beggars as they were eating. I felt humiliated, more so to think that this was all done in my honour, because, as it was put to me by one of the friends there, I was 'friend of the poor.' My friendship for them must be a sorry affair if I could be satisfied with a large part of humanity being reduced to beggary. Little did my friends know that my friendship for the paupers of India has made me hard-hearted enough to contemplate their utter starvation with equanimity in preference to their utter reduction to beggary. My *Ahimsa* would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way, and if I had the power I would stop every *Sadavrat* where free meals are given. It has degraded the nation and it has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime. Such misplaced charity adds nothing to the wealth of the country, whether material or spiritual, and gives a false sense of meritoriousness to the donor. How nice and wise it would be if the donor were to open institutions where they would give meals under healthy, clean surroundings to men and women who would work for them. I personally think that the spinning wheel or any of the processes that cotton has to go through will be an ideal occupation. But if they will not have that, they may choose any other work, only the rule should be 'No labour, No meal.' Every city has its own difficult problem of beggars, a problem for which the monied men are responsible. I know that it is easier to fling free meals in the faces of idlers, but much more difficult to organise an institution where honest work has to be

done before meals are served. From pecuniary standpoint, in the initial stages at any rate, the cost of feeding people after taking work from them will be more than the cost of the present free kitchens. But I am convinced that it will be cheaper in the long run, if we do not want to increase in geometrical progression the race of loafers which is fast overrunning this land.—13th August, 1925.

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*American Satisfaction.*—Whilst several Indian friends have of late been rebuking me for not having accepted the invitation to visit America, an esteemed American friend who knows India fairly well says:

“May I express my gratification of your answer to the request of some American friends to visit this country? I hope you will maintain this attitude because you can do us very much more good from India. There is an element of curiosity-hunting in even the best of our people to which I should exceedingly dislike to see you subjected.”

I may assure the writer that there is no fear of my visiting America to satisfy idle curiosity. I am quite clear in my mind that whether for better or for worse, not till I have made good my position in India can a visit to America or Europe by me be of any service either to the West or to the East.—24th December, 1925.

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*5,000 Miles away.*—The recent debate in the Assembly over the proposal to appoint two additional judges to the Privy Council for the purpose of hearing Indian appeals has revived the controversy about this location of this final court of appeal. If it were not for the hypnotism under which we are labouring we would see without effort the futility, the sinfulness, of going five thousand miles away to get (or buy?) justice. It is said that at that delightful distance the judges are able to decide cases with greater detachment and impartiality than they would

if they had to hear appeals, say in Delhi. The moment the argument is examined it breaks down. Must the poor Londoners have their Privy Council in Delhi? And what should the French and the Americans do? Must the French by arrangement have their final court of appeal in America and the Americans in France? What should we do if India was an independent country? Or is India an exceptional 'case' requiring special favoured treatment giving the right of appeal in far off London? Let no one quote in support of the seat of the Privy Council in London the case of the great Colonies. They retain the anachronism out of sentiment. And the movement is on foot in several Colonies to have their final courts of appeal in their own homes. The sentiment in India is the other way. A self-respecting India would never tolerate the location of her final court of appeal anywhere else but in India.—18th February, 1926.

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*Self-Help and Mutual Help.*—Self-help is the capacity to stand on one's legs without anybody's help. This does not mean indifference to or rejection of outside help, but it means the capacity to be at peace with oneself, to preserve one's self-respect, when outside help is not forthcoming or is refused. A farmer who, rejecting friends' help, insists on tilling his own soil, making his own implements, gathering his own harvest, spinning and weaving his own cloth and building his own house, all by himself, must be either foolish or self-conceited or barbarous. Self-help includes bread-labour and means that every man shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow. Hence a man who works in his field for eight hours daily is entitled to help from the weaver, the carpenter, the blacksmith or the mason. It is not only his right, it is his duty to seek the help of these, and they in their turn benefit by the agriculturist's labour in the field. The eye that would dispense with the help of the hands does not practise self-help, but is conceited and self-deceived. And as the different members of the body are



self-reliant so far as their own functions are concerned and yet are mutually helpful and mutually dependent, so are we three hundred million members of the Indian body politic, each following the rule of self-help in performing his own function, and yet co-operating with one another in all matters of common interest. Only then can we be said to be servants of the country and only then do we deserve to be called nationalists.—13th May, 1926.

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*Place of Sanskrit.*—I am of opinion that Sanskrit cannot be dispensed with in matters religious. The translation, no matter however accurate, cannot replace the original *mantras* which have an import of their own. Besides it would be detracting from the solemnity of the *mantras* which have been repeated in Sanskrit for centuries, to repeat them to-day in the vernaculars. But I am clear that each *mantra* and every rite should be accurately interpreted and explained to the person repeating the *mantra* or participating in the rite. A Hindu's education must be regarded as inadequate without a knowledge of the rudiments of Sanskrit. Hinduism would be extinct without Sanskrit learning and Sanskrit scholarship being cultivated on an adequate scale. We have made the language difficult by the present system of education, it is not really so. But even if it is difficult, practice of religion is still more so. He, therefore, who would practise religion must regard as comparatively easy all the steps to it, however difficult they may appear to be.—13th May, 1926.

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*'Sacrifice' Old and New.*—*Yagna* is a word full of beauty and power. Hence with the growth of knowledge and experience and with the change of time its meaning is likely to grow and change. *Yagna* literally means worship; hence sacrifice; hence any sacrificial act or any act of service. And in this sense every age may and should have its own particular *yagna*.

For mankind lives by *yagna*, sacrifice. But all the *yagnas* described in the Shastras cannot and should not be revived. Some of the rites that go under that name cannot be defended. I even doubt whether the meaning that is put upon some of those rites to-day was ever put upon them in Vedic times. And even if there be no room for doubt, some of them cannot stand the test of reason or morality. Those versed in the scriptures say that in ancient times our ancestors performed human sacrifices. Are they possible today? And a horse-sacrifice would be ridiculous. Again it is needless to canvass whether *yagnas* purify the air or not; for the value of a religious rite cannot be measured by considering whether it produces a comparatively trifling result like purifying the air. Modern science is likely to be more helpful in devising means for purifying the air. The principles of religion are one thing, and practices based on them are another. The principles are absolute and irrespective of space and time. Practices change with place and time.—13th May, 1926.

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*In Search of Guru.*—As a result of my statement in Chapter I, Part II of 'My Experiments with Truth' that I was still in search of a Guru, numerous correspondents, Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians, have favoured me with long letters telling me how to find a Guru. More letters are still coming in. Some tell me actually where to go and whom to see. Some refer me to certain literature. I am grateful to all these correspondents for their solicitude for my welfare. But let them and others realise that my difficulty is fundamental. Nor does it trouble me. It is fundamental because my conception of a Guru is perhaps not of the ordinary. Nothing but perfection will satisfy me. I am in search of one who, though in the flesh, is incorruptible and unmoved by passion, free from the pairs of opposites, who is Truth and *Ahimsa* incarnate and who will therefore fear none and be feared by none. Every one gets the Guru he

deserves and strives for. The difficulty of finding the Guru I want is thus obvious. But it does not worry me ; for it follows from what I have said, that I must try to perfect myself before I meet the Guru in the flesh. Till then I must contemplate him in the spirit. My success lies in my continuous, humble, truthful striving. I *know* the path. It is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is : 'He who strives never perishes.' I have implicit faith in that promise. Though therefore from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I will not lose faith but hope that I shall see the Light when the flesh has been brought under perfect subjection as some day it must. I wonder if the kind correspondents will now understand my position and cease to worry about me but join me in the search, unless they are satisfied that they have found Him.—17th June, 1926.

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*Pundit Malaviyaji and the Bengal Government.*—The Government of Bengal may well congratulate itself upon the courage it has shown in retracing its steps and dropping the proceedings against Pundit Malaviyaji and Dr. Moonje for their civil disobedience. But one could wish that there was grace about the withdrawal of these proceedings! The Standing Counsel for the Government of Bengal made a statement which, I think, was highly offensive. There is no regret shown on behalf of the Government, no apology offered to the distinguished patriots, but, on the contrary, a veiled suggestion that there was possibly some connection between Punditji's presence in Calcutta and the riots that took place, although, the Standing Counsel is obliged to admit that there was nothing offensive or provocative in Punditji's speech on the strength of which the prohibition order was taken out. Surely, it was up to the officials who took the proceedings to see the full text of the speech before applying for an order under Section 144, especially when the order was to be against persons so well-known in public life as Pundit Malaviyaji and Dr. Moonje. If it was a private

party that had acted so hastily as the Government of Bengal seem to have done in this case, that party would have rendered itself liable to an action for damages. If public opinion was well organised and strong, it could bring to book a Government that acted so rashly and recklessly as the Bengal Government have done. In the face of these proceedings is it any wonder that complaint is often heard that proceedings are often thoughtlessly, hastily, and sometimes even vindictively, taken against innocent persons in virtue of arbitrary powers taken by the Government under laws in the framing of which they have had the most part?—3rd June, 1926.

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*A Tissue of Misrepresentations.*—If most newspapers in the world were to cease publication, the world will not lose anything. Probably, it will heave a sigh of relief. The newspapers generally give not facts but fiction. This reflection arises from my having read a so-called interview with me published in the *Messenger of America*. It is the official organ of the American Philosophical Society. Why even a philosophical society's organ should give currency to fiction in the name of fact is more than I can understand.

I should not have noticed this 'interview' but for the distortion it contains about my views of Theosophy.

I must therefore pass by the fiction that 'I was spinning on an old-fashioned loom', or 'that there were mango trees outside my room', or the worse fiction that 'it is through sympathy and understanding of America and the other great nations that we Indians gain the moral force to make our sacrifices'.

I must hasten to the Theosophical fictions. Among other things I am reported to have said that 'I am not in sympathy with Theosophical Movement,' that 'I am still a Theosophist but I am not in sympathy with the movement.' This is just the opposite of what I could have said. For I am not and have never been a member of any Theosophical Society but I am and have ever been in sympathy with its message of universal

brotherhood and consequent toleration. I owe much to Theosophical friends among whom I have many. Whatever critics may say against Madame Blavatsky or Col. Olcott or Dr. Besant, their contribution to humanity will always rank high. What has been a bar to my joining the society, as the interview somewhat correctly puts, is its secret side—its occultism. It has never appealed to me. I long to belong to the masses. Any secrecy hinders the real spirit of democracy. But I recognise that there are two sides at least to every question. And there may be much to be said in favour of occultism in religion. Hinduism is certainly not free from it. But I am not called upon to subscribe to it.

I repeat the request I have often made to interviewers that if they must interview me or report anything about me, they will do me a favour and serve truth, if they will submit to me for correction and verification all they wish to report as having been said by me.—16th September, 1926.

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*Indian Text books.*—What it means to prepare real text-books for India's children may be somewhat realised from the following quotation from a letter from Mr. Gregg who is at present teaching hill children on Mr. Stokes' farm in Kotgarh near Simla. He says:

“My time has been much occupied in preparing a re-arrangement of the text books in both mathematics and physics for my pupils, such as will conform to their experience. All English text-books, and even the Indian ones, are apparently written for city-bred children and presuppose familiarity with machinery and manufactured apparatus of all kinds. These children here have never seen automobiles, steam engines, electric lights, pumps, water-pipes, or even bullock carts. So the assumptions, pictures, technical terms and arrangement of the text-books of physics, and even of much of mathematics can have no reality and therefore no interest or educational value for

them. Gradually, therefore, I am putting together what will be in effect a text-book on science and mathematics for Indian village children. Since most of the children of India are in the villages, I hope it will be useful."

But Mr. Gregg's letter opens up a much wider question. What is true of urbanised, exploiting, and wealthy countries like England and America cannot be true of an India predominantly rural, pauperised and exploited. For India a multiplicity of text-books means deprivation of the vast majority of village children of the means of instruction. Text-books, therefore, in India must mean, principally and for the lower standards, text-books for teachers, not pupils. Indeed, I am not sure that it is not better for the children to have much of the preliminary instruction imparted to them vocally. To impose on children of tender age a knowledge of the alphabet and the ability to read before they can gain general knowledge is to deprive them, whilst they are fresh, of the power of assimilating instruction by word of mouth.—16th September, 1926.

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*Knotty problems of Non-violence.*—The destruction of certain dogs by a mill-owner when some of them were suffering from hydrophobia and when there was danger of the employees being bitten any moment has angered some members of the very influential Jain community of Ahmedabad. Having many friends among them and being regarded by many as an authority in matters of *ahimsa* (non-violence), I have been helplessly and reluctantly drawn into the controversy. As the matter has gone beyond the mere Gujarati-speaking public of Ahmedabad, I am presenting the readers of *Young India* with a translation of the series of articles I am devoting to the subject covering as far as possible the whole wide field of *ahimsa*. I have no doubt that many readers of *Young India* who are interested in the theory and evolution of non-violence will welcome the translation of the series.—21st October, 1926.

*From England.*—A lady from Bristol sends the following :—

“ Herewith £ 1 towards the spinning wheels, would it were £ 100. I expect you do not realise how much help you get from spirits in England who realise the awful weight that lies upon you and try to help you, sending forth their spirits to you.”

The virtue of letters like this lies not in the value of the monetary contribution but an appreciation of the fundamental fact underlying the spinning wheel viz., that it is an attempt to replace the spirit of killing competition that threatens to turn man into beast, by the spirit of co-ordinated effort that lifts the whole humanity with the lifting of one's own self. This movement can only succeed if the purest forces in the world combine to work towards the consummation. But the momentum must first come from within India's borders. And if I had no faith in God, in India and the cause, ‘ the awful weight ’ would certainly kill me. As it is, I turn the weight over to God's broad shoulders.—16th November, 1926.

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*A Warning.*—Of late many young men have been coming to the Satyagrahashram, without warning, and without permission, either to stay for a short time or to be admitted as candidates for membership. Much as the management would like to find room for all who choose to come, whether as visitors or candidate members, it is physically impossible even to make the attempt. The Ashram is at present taxed to its utmost capacity and the management has been obliged to put off even friends who had sought previous permission and intended to find their own expenses. It is improper for young men to come without notice and permission. During the past fortnight four such young men have come. And what was more grievous still was that they did not even bring enough to pay their way back. The last was an M. A., who said he came with a view of joining the Ashram, but on the way altered his decision and thought he would stay for a few days and study the Ashram life. He had

brought with him no credentials and had not enough money on his person to buy a return ticket. I had to harden my heart and tell him that he could not stay at the Ashram without having obtained previous permission. It is incomprehensible to me that well-educated young men should not know the ordinary courtesies of life and the laws of hospitality. I know that there is an evil reputation about the Ashram. Visitors who have come without notice have sometimes told me that they thought that the Ashram was the one place in India where people could go without permission and find a warm welcome. It is therefore as well for young men to realise that the Ashram cannot live up to any such expectation and that it is but an ordinary human institution striving to reach its ideals and ever failing to do so. The members would be satisfied if it could be said of them that they had tried their best to realise the ideals they had subscribed to.

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*To Journalist Friends*:—Applications for articles for journals and magazines in and out of India are daily pouring in upon me. Things have come to such a pass that I must either leave *Young India* and *Navajivan* editing or respectfully refuse to write for other papers. Since I must not, so long as there are enough subscribers and I have energy, give up *Young India* or *Navajivan*, I have been forced to stop writing for other papers. The fact is I have not the ability to write at will on any and every subject. My field is very limited and even on the subjects I am familiar with, I cannot always be original. I have no false notions about the efficacy of my writings. On the contrary, I know that often the unwritten word is more forcible and truer than the written or the spoken word. Let the sum of our acts speak. The continuous multiplication of ephemeral literature is growing into a terrible nuisance which I must not assist to increase even if I cannot do anything to stop or regulate it.—  
28th October, 1926

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*Bi-Amman.*—It is difficult to think of Bi-Amman as dead. Who does not know the stately figure of Bi-Amman or her voice at public gatherings? Though old in years, she possessed the energy of youth. She travelled ceaselessly in the cause of the Khilafat and Swaraj. A staunch follower of Islam, she realised that the cause of Islam, in so far as it depended on human effort depended upon the freedom of India. She realised with equal conviction that freedom of India was impossible without Hindu-Muslim unity and khaddar. She therefore ceaselessly preached unity which had become an article of faith with her. She had discarded all her foreign or mill-made clothing and taken to khaddar. Maulana Mahomed Ali tells me she had enjoined upon him that on her death she should have nothing but khaddar. Whenever I had the privilege of going to her bedside, her inquiry was about Swaraj and Unity. The inquiry was invariably followed by the prayer that God might grant wisdom to Hindus and Mussalmans to understand the necessity of unity and that He may in His mercy let her live to see Swaraj established. The best way in which we can treasure the memory of this brave and noble soul is to imitate her in her zeal for the common cause. Hinduism without unity and Swaraj is as much in peril as Islam. Would that Hindus and Mussalmans had the commonsense of Bi-Amman to appreciate this elementary fact. God grant her soul peace and the Ali Brothers strength to continue the mission bequeathed to them.

I must not omit to mention the impressive and solemn scene that I had the good fortune to witness on the night of Bi-Amman's death. Having heard that life was ebbing away in her, Sarojini Devi and I hurried to her bedside. She was surrounded by many members of the family, Dr. Ansari, the friend and physician of the family, was also in attendance. I heard no sobbing, though I noticed tears trickling down Maulana Mahomed Ali's cheeks. The Big Brother restrained himself with difficulty, though there was an unusual solemnity about his face. They were all chanting the name of Allah. One friend was reciting the last prayers. The *Comrade* press was situated within

earshot of Bi-Amman's bedroom. But the work was not interrupted for a single moment. Nor did the Maulana interrupt his own editorial duties. Indeed no essential public duty was suspended. Maulana Shaukat Ali would not dream of my postponing my visit to the Ramjas College. And like a good soldier he kept the appointment he had made with the Hindus of Muzaffarnagar although he had to proceed there almost immediately after Bi-Amman's death. All this was as it should have been. Birth and death are not two different states, but they are different aspects of the same state. There is as little reason to deplore the one as there is to be pleased over the other.—20th Nover. 1924.

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*Late Parsi Rustomjee* :—A cable received from Durban from his son gives me the sad news of the death of Rustomjee Jiwanjee Ghorkhodoo. For me it is a personal loss. He was a valued client, dear friend and faithful co-worker. He was as true a Parsi as he was a true Indian. He was an equally true man. He was an orthodox Parsi, but his Zoroastrianism was as broad as humanity itself. He befriended all without distinction. He could act pleasingly towards officials, but he could be unbending when the occasion demanded it. His word was as good as his bond. He was brave as a lion. He was chary of making promises, but if he made them, he strove his best to keep them. After he declared himself a satyagrahi, he never swerved even during darkest hours of the movement, not even when the end seemed never to be coming. When he took the pledge, he was by no means a young man. Nor was he untrammelled by business pre-occupations. But he never counted the cost. He suffered losses without a murmur. He gave almost beyond his means and yet never unthinkingly. His charities were most catholic. He gave donations for mosques, madrasas, national schools. Many a young man owes his rise to Parsi Rustomjee, as he was called throughout South Africa. Personally I owe much to him. I have many friends in South Africa.

But I have not known a warmer one. He harboured me when I was lynched. His house was a place of refuge for me and mine. People wonder why I am partial to Parsis. I am not partial, but I am thankful that I can bear testimony to their admirable virtues. So long as the memory of Parsi Rustomjee persists with me, so long will that portion of humanity claim my respectful admiration. If we had many Rustomjees in our public life, we should not be long in reaching our cherished goal. May his soul rest in peace, and may God give wisdom and strength to his two sons to follow in the footsteps of their noble father!—  
20th November, 1924.

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*Man's inhumanity to Man*:—In the midst of the incessant rush I am going through in this land of palms (Travancore) where I am writing these notes, I cannot resist noting down a never-fading sight I had to witness at Cochin. Cochin has imported from Japan numerous *rickshas* which its well-to-do citizens use for their convenience. These are drawn not by animals but by men. I carefully noted as many of these carriers as passed. Not one impressed me with his physique. They had neither the calves nor the chest nor the arms well-formed for the arduous task of carrying a burden in the hot sun and melting heat. The *rickshas* are built for carrying one passenger only. In my opinion it is bad enough for a healthy and full limbed man to be carried by man, but I was ashamed of my species and pained beyond measure to see two and even three passengers huddled together in some *rickshas*. It was no doubt wrong for the carrier not to refuse to carry more than one burden. But what is one to say of the pair or the trio who in order to save a few coppers would not be ashamed to be carried by a member of their species who is hardly fit to carry even one of them. I hope there is a law in Cochin prohibiting the carrying of more than one passenger in these *rickshas*. And if there is one, I hope the kindly citizens will see to it that it is strictly obeyed. But if there is no such law, I hope that one would be passed making the carriage of

more than one passenger an impossibility. If I had the power I would abolish the *rickshas*. But that I know must remain a pious hope. But is it too much to hope that men who ply these *rickshas* will be subjected to a strict medical examination as to their fitness for the heavy work?

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*Inter-Dining* :—A correspondent asks, 'should children belonging to different castes and living in one boarding house be made to dine together in a common dining room?' The question is not well put. But the answer to the question as it is put would be that children cannot be made to inter-dine. If, however, it be urged that no boarding house keeper can make rules requiring all who care to join it to inter-dine, it would be as unreasonable a demand as it would be to compel children who are admitted without such stipulation as to inter-dining to dine in company with children belonging to other castes. In the absence of any rule to the contrary, I should imagine that the presumption would be that the usual rules for separate dining arrangements would apply. This question of inter-dining is a vexed one and in my opinion no hard and fast rules can be laid down. Personally, I am not sure that inter-dining is a necessary reform. At the same time I recognise the tendency towards breaking down the restriction altogether. I can find reasons for and against the restriction. I would not force the pace. I do not regard it as a sin for a person not to dine with another nor do I regard it as sinful if one advocates and practises inter-dining. I should, however, resist the attempt to break down the restriction in disregard of the feelings of others. On the contrary, I would respect their scruples in the matter.

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*19th March, 1925*

## SATYAGRAHI'S DUTY

BY M. K. GANDHI

[The following is almost a verbatim report of the quiet talk I gave to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram at Vykom. The Ashram has at the present moment over fifty volunteers who stand or squat in front of the four barricades which are put up to guard the four entrances to the Vykom temple. They spin whilst they are stationed there and remain there at a stretch for six hours. They are sent in two relays. I reproduce the talk as being of general interest and applicable to all Satyagrahis.]

I am sorry that I shall be going away to-day without having a chat with you which I would regard as complete and satisfactory. But it seems it is not possible to do more. Those in charge of arrangements about my programme are of opinion that I ought to see, in order to help the cause, more places than Vykom. I have yielded to their advice but my own conviction based on past experience is that the success of the movement depends more on yourself than on outside support. If there is nothing in you, or if there is not much in you, any amount of enthusiasm brought about by a passing visit like mine will be of no avail. But if I had not come here and there had been no enthusiasm on the part of the public, and if you had been true to yourself there would have been nothing wanting. Your work would have commanded all the enthusiasm that might have been needed for a cause like this. Therefore if I could have passed here a longer time than I have, it would have been more profitable. However, that could not be done in face of the advice of friends who are guiding me.

But I want to tell you as briefly as I can what I expect of you. I would ask you to forget the political aspect of the programme. Political consequences of this struggle there are, but you are not to concern yourself with them. If you do, you will miss the true result and also miss the political consequences,

and when the real heat of the struggle is touched you will be found wanting. I am therefore anxious, even if it frightens you, to explain to you the true nature of the struggle. It is a struggle deeply religious for the Hindus. We are endeavouring to rid Hinduism of its greatest blot. The prejudice we have to fight against is an age-long prejudice. The struggle for the opening of the roads round the temple which we hold to be public to the unapproachables is but a small skirmish in the big battle. If our struggle was to end with the opening of the roads in Vykom you may be sure I would not have bothered my head about it. If therefore you think that the struggle is to end with opening of the roads in Vykom to the unapproachables you are mistaken. The road must be opened. It has got to be opened. But that will be the beginning of the end. The end is to get all such roads throughout Travancore to be opened to the unapproachables; and not only that, but we expect that our efforts may result in amelioration of the general condition of the untouchables and unapproachables. That will require tremendous sacrifice. For our aim is not to do things by violence to opponents. That will be conversion by violence or compulsion, and if we import compulsion in matters of religion, there is no doubt that we shall be committing suicide. We should carry on this struggle on the lines of strict non-violence, i. e. by suffering in our own persons. That is the meaning of Satyagraha. The question is whether you are capable of every suffering that may be imposed upon you or may be your lot in the journey towards the goal. Even whilst you are suffering, you may have no bitterness—no trace of it—against your opponents. And I tell you it is not a mechanical act at all. On the contrary, I want you to feel like loving your opponents and the way to do it is to give them the same credit for honesty of purpose which you would claim for yourself. I know that it is a difficult task. I confess that it was a difficult task for me yesterday whilst I was talking to those friends who insisted on their right to exclude the unapproachables from the temple roads. I confess there was selfishness behind their talk. How then was I to credit them with honesty

of purpose? I was thinking of this thing yesterday and also this morning, and this is what I did. I asked myself: 'Wherein was their selfishness or self-interest? It is true that they have their ends to serve. But so have we our ends to serve. Only we consider our ends to be pure and therefore selfless. But who is to determine where selflessness ends and selfishness begins. Selflessness may be the purest form of selfishness.' I do not say this for the sake of argument. But that is what I really feel. I am considering their condition of mind from their point of view and not my own. Had they not been Hindu they would not have talked as they did yesterday. And immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless for a Satyagrahi it is absolutely essential. Three fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably. In our case there is no question of our agreeing with them quickly as our ideals are radically different. But we may be charitable to them and believe that they actually mean what they say. They do not want to open the roads to the unapproachables. Now whether it is their self-interest or ignorance that tells them to say so, we really believe that it is wrong of them to say so. Our business therefore is to show them that they are in the wrong and we should do so by our suffering. I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are agelong and based on supposed religious authority. Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding. Therefore, there must be no trace of compulsion in our acts. We must not be impatient, and we must have an undying faith in the means we are adopting. The means we are adopting just now are that we approach the four barricades and as we are stopped there we sit down and spin away from day to day, and we must believe that through it the roads must be opened. I know that it is a

difficult and slow process. But if you believe in the efficacy of Satyagraha you will rejoice in this slow torture and suffering, and you will not feel the discomfort of your position as you go and sit in the boiling sun from day to day. If you have faith in the cause and the means and in God the hot sun will be cool for you. You must not be tired and say 'how long,' and never get irritated. That is only a small portion of your penance for the sin for which Hinduism is responsible.

I regard you as soldiers in this campaign. It is not possible for you to reason out things for yourselves. You have come to the Ashram because you have faith in the management. That does not mean faith in me. For I am not manager. I am directing the movement so far as ideals and general direction are concerned. Your faith therefore must be in those who are managers for the time being. The choice before coming to the Ashram was yours. But having made your choice and come to the Ashram it is not for you to reason why. If we are to become a powerful nation you must obey all directions that may be given to you from time to time. This is the only way in which either political or religious life can be built up. You must have determined for yourselves certain principles and you must have joined the struggle in obedience to these principles. Those who remain in the Ashram are taking as much part in the struggle as those who go and offer Satyagraha at the barricades. Every piece of work in connection with the struggle is just as important as any other piece, and therefore the work of sanitation in the Ashram is just as important as spinning away at the barricades. And if in this place the work of cleaning the closets and compound is more distasteful than spinning it should be considered far more important and profitable. Not a single minute should be wasted in idle conversation, but we must be absorbed in the work before us and if every one of us work in that spirit you will see that there is pleasure in the work itself. Every bit of property, anything in the Ashram should be regarded by you as your own property and not property that can be wasted at pleasure. You may not waste a grain of rice or a scrap of



paper, and similarly a minute of your time. It is not ours. It belongs to the nation and we are trustees for the use of it.

I know that all this will sound hard and difficult for you. My presentation may be hard, but it has not been possible for me to present the thing in any other way. For it will be wrong on my part if I deceive you or myself in believing that this is an easy thing.

Much corruption has crept into our religion. We have become lazy as a nation, we have lost the time sense. Selfishness dominates our action. There is mutual jealousy amongst the tallest of us. We are uncharitable to one another. And if I did not draw your attention to the things I have, it will not be possible for us to rid ourselves of all these evils. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth. I can only hope you will realise the import of what you are doing. And if you do, your path will be easy—easy because you will take delight in difficulties and you will laugh in hope when everybody is in despair. I believe in the illustrations *Rishis* or poets have given in religious books. For example, I literally believe in the possibility of a Sudhanva smiling away whilst he was being drowned in the boiling oil. For to him it was greater torture to forget his Maker than to be in boiling oil. And so it can be in a lesser measure here, if we have a spark of Sudhanva's faith in this struggle.

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*29th January, 1925*

### COW PROTECTION

BY M. K. GANDHI

The following is the substance of Mr. Gandhi's presidential speech at the Cow Conference held during the Congress week at Belgaum:—

"I hold the question of cow protection to be not less momentous but in certain respects even of far greater moment

than that of Swaraj. I would even go so far as to say that just as so long as Hindu-Muslim unity is not effected, Hinduism not purged of the taint of untouchability and the wearing of hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar does not become universal, Swaraj would be impossible of attainment, even so the term 'Swaraj' would be devoid of all meaning so long as we have not found out a way of saving the cow, for that is the touchstone on which Hinduism must be tested and proved before there can be any real Swaraj in India. I claim to be a Sanatani Hindu. People may laugh and say that to call myself a Sanatani Hindu when I eat and drink from the hands of Mussalmans and Christians, keep an untouchable girl in my house as my daughter and do not even hesitate to quote the Bible, is nothing short of doing violence to language. But I would still adhere to my claim, for I have faith in me which tells me that a day would come—may be most probably after I am dead and no longer present in this world in the flesh to bear witness—when my critics would recognize their error and admit the justness of my claim. Pretty long while ago, I once wrote in *Young India* an article on Hinduism, which I consider to be one of my most thoughtful writings on the subject. The definition of Hinduism which I gave in it is probably the clearest that I have ever given. After defining a Hindu as one who believed in the Vedas and Upanishads, recited the *Gayatri* and subscribed to the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration etc, I added that so far as the popular notion of Hinduism was concerned, its distinguishing feature was belief in cow protection and reverence for the cow. I do not want to be told as to what Hindus ten-thousand years ago did. I know there are scholars who tell us that cow-sacrifice is mentioned in the Vedas. I remember when I was a high school student we read a sentence in our Sanskrit text-book to the effect that the Brahmins of old used to eat beef. That exercised my mind greatly and I used to wonder and ask myself whether what was written could be after all true. But as I grew up the conviction slowly forced itself upon me that even if the text on which these statements were based was act-

ually part of the Vedas, the interpretation put upon it could not be correct. I had conceived of another way out of the difficulty. This was purely for personal satisfaction. "If the Vedic text under reference was incapable of bearing any other interpretation than the literal," I said to myself, "the Brahmins who were alleged to be eating beef had the power to bring the slaughtered animals back to life again." But that is neither here nor there. The speculation does not concern the general mass of the Hindus. I do not claim to be a Vedic scholar. I have read Sanskrit scriptures largely in translation. A layman like myself, therefore can hardly have any *locus standi* in a controversy like this. But I have confidence in myself. Therefore I do not hesitate to freely express to others my opinions based on my inner experience. It may be that we may not be all able to agree as to the exact meaning and significance of cow protection. For Hinduism does not rest on the authority of one book or one prophet; nor does it possess a common creed—like the Kalima of Islam—acceptable to all. That renders a common definition of Hinduism a bit difficult, but therein lies its strength also. For, it is this special feature that has given to Hinduism its inclusive and assimilative character and made its gradual, silent evolution possible. Go to any Hindu child and he would tell you that cow protection is the supreme duty of every Hindu and that any one who does not believe in it hardly deserves the name of a Hindu.

But while I am a firm believer in the necessity and importance of cow protection, I do not at all endorse the current methods adopted for that purpose. Some of the practices followed in the name of cow protection cause me extreme anguish. My heart aches within me. Several years ago I wrote in "Hind Swaraj" that our cow protection societies were in fact so many cow killing societies. Since then and after my return to India in 1915 that conviction of mine has grown stronger and firmer everyday. Holding the views that I do, therefore, I have naturally felt a great hesitation in accepting the Presidentship of this Conference. Would it be

proper for me to preside over this Conference under these circumstances? Would I at all succeed in convincing you of the soundness of my views—radically different as they are from the commonly accepted notions on this subject? These were the questions that filled my mind. But Mr. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande wired to me that I might preside over the Conference on my terms, that Sjt. Chikodi was familiar with my views on the matter and was at one with me to a very large extent. So much by way of personal explanation.

Once, while in Champaran, I was asked to expound my views regarding cow protection. I told my Champaran friends then that if anybody was really anxious to save the cow, he ought once for all to disabuse his mind of the notion that he had to make the Christians and Mussalmans to desist from cow-killing. Unfortunately today we seem to believe that the problem of cow protection consists merely in preventing non-Hindus especially Mussalmans from beef-eating and cow-killing. That seems to me to be absurd. Let no one, however, conclude from this that I am indifferent when a non-Hindu kills a cow or that I can bear the practice of cow-killing. On the contrary, no one probably experiences a greater agony of the soul when a cow is killed. But what am I to do? Am I to fulfil my *Dharma* myself or am I to get it fulfilled by proxy? Of what avail would be my preaching *Brahmacharya* to others if I am at the same time steeped in vice myself? How can I ask Mussalmans to desist from eating beef when I eat it myself? But supposing even that I myself do not kill the cow, is it any part of my duty to make the Mussalman, against his will, to do likewise? Mussalmans claim that Islam permits them to kill the cow. To make a Mussalman, therefore, to abstain from Cow-killing under compulsion, would amount in my opinion to converting him to Hinduism by force. Even in India under Swarajya, in my opinion, would be for a Hindu majority unwise and improper to coerce by legislation a Mussalman minority into submission to statutory prohibition of cow slaughter. When I pledge myself to save the cow, I do not mean merely the Indian cow, but.

the cow all the world over. My religion teaches me that I should by my personal conduct instil into the minds of those who might hold different views, the conviction that cow killing is a sin and that therefore it ought to be abandoned. My ambition is no less than to see the principle of cow protection established throughout the world. But that requires that I should set my own house thoroughly in order first.

Let alone other provinces. Would you believe me if I told you that the Hindus of Gujarat practice cow killing? You will wonder but let me tell you that in Gujarat the bullocks employed for drawing carts are goaded with spiked rods till blood oozes from their bruised backs. You may say that this is not cow killing but bullock killing. But I see no difference between the two, the killing of the cow and killing her male progeny. Again you may say that this practice may be abominable and worthy of condemnation but it hardly amounts to killing. But here, again, I beg to differ. If the bullock in question had a tongue to speak and were asked which fate he preferred—instantaneous death under the butcher's knife or the long-drawn agony to which he is subjected, he would undoubtedly prefer the former. At Calcutta a Sindhi gentleman used to meet me often. He used always to tell me stories about the cruelty that was practiced by milkmen on cows in Calcutta. He asked me to see for myself the process of milking the cows as carried on in the dairies. The practice of blowing is loathesome. The people who do this are Hindus. Again, nowhere in the world is the condition of cattle so poor as in India. Nowhere in the world would you find such skeletons of cows and bullocks as you do in our cow-worshipping India. Nowhere are bullocks worked so beyond their capacity as here. I contend that so long as these things continue we have no right to ask anybody to stop cow-killing. In Bhagawat in one place the illustrious author describes the various things which have been the cause of India's downfall. One of the causes mentioned is that we have given up cow protection. To day I want to bring home to you if I can the close relation which exists between the present poverty-

stricken condition of India and our failure to protect the cow. We, who live in cities probably can have no idea of the extent of the poverty of our poor folk. Millions upon millions cannot afford to have two full meals per day. Some live on rotten rice only. There are others for whom salt and chillies are the only table luxuries. Is it not a just nemesis for our belying of our religion?

Then in India we have the system of *Pinjrapols*. The way in which most of these are managed is far from satisfactory. And yet, I am sorry to observe that the people who are mostly responsible for them are *Jains*, who are out and out believers in *Ahimsa*. Well organised, these *Pinjrapols* ought to be flourishing dairies supplying pure good milk at a cheap rate to the poor. I am told however that even in a rich city like Ahmedabad there are cases of the wives of labourers feeding their babies on flour dissolved in water. There cannot be a sadder commentary on the way in which we protect the cow than that in a country which has such an extensive system of *Pinjrapols* the poor should experience a famine of pure, good milk. That I hope will serve to explain to you how our failure to protect the cow at one end of the chain results in our skin and bone starvings at the other.

If, therefore, I am asked how to save the cow, my first advice will be, "dismiss from your minds the Mussalmans and Christians altogether and mind your own duty first." I have been telling Maulana Shaukat Ail all along that I was helping him to save his cow i.e. the Khilafat, because I hoped to save my cow thereby. I am prepared to place my life in the hands of the Mussalmans, to live merely on their sufferance. Why? Simply that I might be able to protect the cow. I hope to achieve the end not by entering into a bargain with the Mussalmans but by bringing about a change of heart in them. So long as this is not done I hold my soul in patience. For I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that such a change of heart can be brought about only by our own correct conduct towards them and by our personal example.

Cow-slaughter and man-slaughter, are in my opinion the two sides of the same coin. And the remedy for both is identical i.e. that we develop the Ahimsa principle and endeavour to win over our opponents by love. The test of love is tapasya and tapasya means suffering. I offered to share with the Mussalmans their suffering to the best of my capacity not merely because I wanted their co-operation for winning Swaraj but also because I had in mind the object of saving the cow. The Koran, so far as I have been able to understand it, declares it to be a sin to take the life of any living being without cause. I want to develop the capacity to convince the Mussalmans that to kill the cow is practically to kill their fellow countrymen and friends—the Hindus. The Koran says that there can be no heaven for one who sheds the blood of an innocent neighbour. Therefore I am anxious to establish the best neighbourly relations with the Mussalmans. I scrupulously avoid doing anything that might hurt their feelings. I even try to respect their prejudices. But I do this not in a spirit of bargain, I ask them for no reward. For that I look to God only. My Gita tells me that evil can never result from a good action. Therefore I must help the Mussalmans from a pure sense of duty—without making any terms with them. For more cows are killed today for the sake of Englishmen in India than for the Mussalmans. I want to convert the former also. I would like to convince them that whilst they are in our midst their duty lies in getting rid of their Western culture to the extent that it comes in conflict with ours. You will thus see that even our self-interest requires us to observe Ahimsa. By Ahimsa we will be able to save the cow and also to win the friendship of the English. I want to purchase the friendship of all by sacrifice. But if I do not approach the English on bent knees, as I the Mussalmans that is because the former are intoxicated with power. The Mussalman is a fellow sufferer in slavery. We can therefore speak to him as a friend and a comrade. The Englishman on the contrary is unable to appreciate our friendly advances. He would spurn them. He does not care for our friendship, he wants to patronize us.

We want neither his insults nor his patronage. We therefore let him alone. Our Shastras have laid down that charity should be given only to a deserving person, that knowledge should be imparted only to one who is desirous of having it. So we content ourselves with non-co-operating with our rulers—not out of hatred but in a spirit of love. It was because love was the motive force behind non-co-operation that I advised suspension of civil disobedience when violence broke out in Bombay and Chauri Chaura. I wanted to make it clear to Englishmen that I wanted to win Swaraj not by shedding their blood but by making them feel absolutely at ease as regards the safety of their persons. What profit would it be if I succeed in saving a few cows from death by using force against persons who do not regard cow-killing as sinful. Cow protection then can only be secured by cultivating universal friendliness, i. e. Ahimsa. Now you will understand why I regard the question of cow protection as greater even than that of Swaraj. The fact is that the capacity to achieve the former will suffice for the latter purpose as well.

So far I have confined myself to the grosser or material aspect of cow protection i. e. the aspect that refers to the animal cow only. In its finer or spiritual sense the term cow protection means the protection of every living creature. Today the world does not fully realize the force and possibilities that lie hidden in Ahimsa. The scriptures of Christians, Mussalmans and Hindus are all replete with the teaching of Ahimsa. But we do not know its full import. The Rishis of old performed terrible penances and austerities to discover the right meaning of sacred texts. Today we have at least two interpretations of the Gayatri. Which one of them is correct, that of the Sanatanists or that of the Arya Samajists? Who can say? But our Rishis made the startling discovery (and every day I feel more and more convinced of its truth) that sacred texts and inspired writings yield their truth only in proportion as one has advanced in the practice of Ahimsa and truth. The greater the realization of truth and Ahimsa the greater the illumination. These same



Rishis declared that cow protection was the supreme duty of a Hindu and that its performance brought one Moksha i. e. salvation. Now I am not ready to believe that by merely protecting the animal cow, one can attain Moksha. For Moksha one must completely get rid of one's lower feelings like attachment, hatred, anger, jealousy etc. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of cow protection in terms of Moksha must be much wider and far more comprehensive than is commonly supposed. The cow protection which can bring one Moksha must, from its very nature, include the protection of everything that feels. Therefore in my opinion, every little breach of the Ahimsa principle, like causing hurt by harsh speech to any one, man, woman or child, to cause pain to the weakest and the most insignificant creature on earth would be a breach of the principle of cow protection, would be tantamount to the sin of beef-eating—differing from it in degree, if at all, rather than in kind. That being so, I hold that with all our passions let loose we cannot to-day claim to be following the principle of cow protection.

At Lahore I met Lala Dhanpatrai, somewhat of a crank like myself. He told me that if I wanted to save the cow I should wean the Hindus from their false notions. He said it was Hindus who sold cows to the Mussalman butcher and but for them the latter would have no cows to kill. The reason for this practice he told me was economical. The village commons that served as grazing grounds for the cattle had been enclosed by the Government and so people could not afford to keep cows. He suggested a way out of the difficulty. It was no longer necessary, he told me, to sell cows that had ceased to give milk. He himself, he said, had tried the experiment of buying such cows. He then put them to the plough. After some time, if proper care was taken, they put on flesh and became fit to bear again. I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement. But I see no reason why this practice should not be generally adopted if the facts are as stated by Lala Dhanpatrai. Our Shastras, certainly have nowhere said that under no circumstances should the cow not be used for draught purposes. If we feed the cow properly,

tend it carefully and then use her for drawing carts or working the plough, always taking care not to tax her beyond her capacity, there can be nothing wrong in it. I therefore commend the suggestion for consideration and adoption if it is found to be workable. We may not look down upon a person if he tries to protect the cow in this manner.

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